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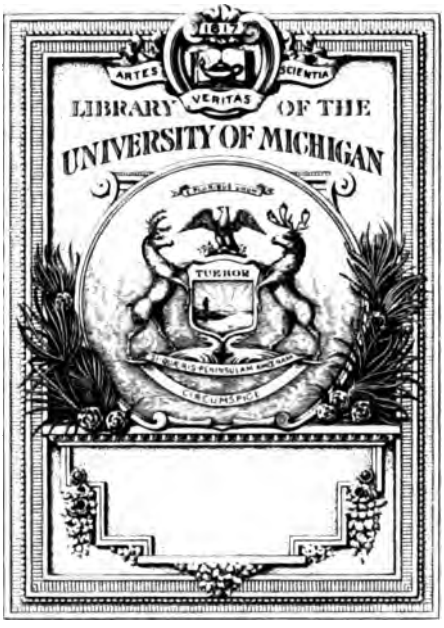
ILLIAM BODHAM DONNE

AND HIS FRIENDS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WILLIAM BODHAM DONNE
AND HIS FRIENDS

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WILLIAM BODHAM DONNE

ABOUT 1860

LLIAM BODHAM DONNE
AND HIS FRIENDS

EDITED BY

CATHARINE B. JOHNSON

WITH SIXTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS

METHUEN & CO.
36 ESSEX STREET W.C.
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PREFACE

IN the following pages the Editor has made no attempt to write a Biography of William Bodham Donne, but only so to select the letters that they may give a connected idea of the events of his life, and illustrate his character.

Only half of the correspondence submitted to her has been used by the Editor, and she desires to acknowledge most gratefully the kind way in which Mr. Donne's family have helped her in the matter.

Her thanks are also due (1) to His Majesty the King for his gracious permission to publish the letter written by command of Queen Victoria on W. B. Donne's retirement from the Censorship of Plays, 5th August, 1874; (2) to the Editor of *The Academy and Literature* for permission to reproduce the statistics relative to the London Library which appeared in the issues of 24th January, 1903, and 13th June, 1903; (3) to Miss Trench, and Messrs. Kegan Paul & Trench for leave to print letters of W. B. Donne which have already appeared in Archbishop Trench's *Life and Memorials*, and to reproduce his portrait by Samuel Laurence; (4) to Miss Kerrich and W. Aldis Wright, Esq., for permission to use the letters of Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne and his family, not hitherto published, and to Messrs. Macmillan for leave to reproduce the portrait of Edward FitzGerald and Mrs. F. Kemble; (5) to Miss Blakesley for the collection of letters to and from her father, the Dean of Lincoln, and to Messrs. Bassano for leave to use the photograph of the same; (6) to Mrs. Wister (daughter of Mrs.

181529

Fanny Kemble) and her son, for most generously
"typed" copies of the letters of W. B. Donne to M
(7) to Mr. Charles Williams for putting at her dispos
respondence relative to the "Miniature" of Dr. Willia
(8) to Sir Henry Lennard for leave to publish a letter
Hallam to W. B. Donne; and (9)[1] to the Rev. J.
permission to print the letters of Bernard Barton.

The Editor wishes also to acknowledge her great in
ness to Miss E. M. Symonds (George Paston) for her un
help and encouragement.

[1] Rev. Joseph Barton died 5th February, 1905, while this was in the

INTRODUCTION

THE name of my grandfather William Bodham Donne is practically unknown to the present generation; yet his letters should not fail to be interesting to those to whom the names of Edward FitzGerald, Archbishop Trench and Mrs. Fanny Kemble are as household words, since he was the intimate friend of all three. Of an extremely modest and retiring disposition, W. B. Donne was one of those men who are best made known by their friendships.

Like his cousin the poet Cowper, he possessed the power of fascinating all those who came within his reach. As Dean Blakesley once said of him: "Many men are *liked*, but Donne is *loved*". Mrs. Fanny Kemble in her *Records of Later Life* thus speaks of him: "William Bodham Donne, my brother John's school and college mate, for more than fifty years of this changeful life the unchanged, dear and devoted friend of me and mine—accomplished scholar, elegant writer, man of exquisite and refined taste, such a *gentleman* that my sister (Mrs. Sartoris) always said he was the original of the hero in Boccaccio's story of the Falcon".[1]

But although his friends scarcely ever write of him without some term of endearment, there was nothing effeminate in Mr. Donne's character. His letters show the keenness of his in-

[1] From the *Decameron*. The story of the poor man, who, when the wealthy lady whom he loved came to see him in his poverty, killed his pet falcon, that being the most precious and dainty dish he could set before her.

tellect, the soundness of his judgment, his almost unerring critical faculty and underlying sense of humour. His was the gentleness of the strong, the sweet disposition of the man who has his naturally somewhat fiery temper well under control.

Tradition asserts that the Norfolk Donnes came originally from Wales, and were a branch of the family of Dwns of Picton and Cwdweli Castles, Pembrokeshire. George Borrow told Mr. Donne that he believed the name to be the same as D'Uan, and the root identical with that of Evans and Hughes. A branch of the family settled in Norfolk in very early times. As far back as 1321 a David Donne owned property at Rougham, and among the ranks of the clergy of Norfolk in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are many members of the same family. In a pedigree granted by the College of Arms in 1792 to the poet Cowper, whose mother was a Norfolk Donne, the first record of the family runs thus: "Roger Donne of Ludham, Norfolk, Gent., born 17th April, 1675, died 9th Nov., 1722, son of William Donne of Letheringsett, Norfolk, born 1645, died 1684, *supposed* to be descended from Dr. Donne the Dean of St. Paul's".

It is curious how persistently the tradition holds good in the family that the Poet Dean was an ancestor, and Cowper himself calls him "our forefather Donne". It is true that the good Dean died in 1631, only fourteen years before the birth of the above William Donne, in whose family the tradition has been handed down, but the claim cannot actually be proved.

Dr. Jessopp, on the other hand, asserts the contrary. In his *Life of Dr. Donne* (1897, p. 225, Appendix B.) he says: "My belief is that neither of Dr. Donne's sons had any male offspring. It is hardly conceivable that if at the end of the seventeenth century any descendants of the Dean entitled to perpetuate his illustrious name had been still living, the fact should have remained undiscovered down to our own time."

The above Roger Donne of Ludham had two children, a daughter Anne (who became the mother of the poet Cowper by her marriage with the Rev. John Cowper, D.D.) and a son

Roger (W. B. Donne's greatgrandfather), who became Rector of Catfield, Norfolk, 1732.

Roger Donne seems to have been a man greatly beloved by his family, and Cowper speaks in some of his letters of the happy days spent in his uncle's Rectory at Catfield. Writing to Roger Donne's daughter Anne (Mrs. Bodham) from Weston, 27th February, 1790, he says:—

"There is in me, I believe, more of the Donne than of the Cowper, and, though I love all of both names, and have a thousand reasons to love those of my own name, yet I feel the bond of nature draw me vehemently to your side. I was thought, in the days of my childhood, much to resemble my mother; and in my natural temper, of which, at the age of fifty-eight, I must be supposed to be a competent judge, can trace both her and my late uncle, your father (Roger Donne). Somewhat of his irritability; and a little, I would hope, both of his and of her —— I know not what to call it, without seeming to praise myself which is not my intention—but, speaking to *you*, I will even speak out, and say *good*-nature. Add to all this, I deal much in poetry, as did our venerable ancestor, the Dean of St. Paul's, and I think I shall have proved myself a Donne at all points," and after sending his love to his other cousins, he says: "Neither do I at all forget my cousin, Harriet. She and I have been many a time merry at Catfield, and have made the Parsonage ring with laughter. Give my love to her."

Mrs. Roger Donne must have been, as her letters prove, a sprightly lady, with a keen sense of humour. She was the daughter of the Rev. Peter Rival, "French Chaplain to His Majesty". After her husband's death, Mrs. Donne's mother married a Spaniard of the name of Castres, and their son, Abraham Castres, was Envoy Extraordinary at Lisbon at the time of the great earthquake (1755), and for his services at that time the people of Lisbon presented him with a portrait[1] of himself.

[1] For a mention of this picture, which was left to his half sister, Mrs. Roger Donne, *vide* the letter dated 1st June, 1840, to Bernard Barton.

Roger Donne's son, Castres, the maternal grandfather of W. B. Donne, was Vicar of Loddon, Norfolk, and Chaplain to Lord Camerford. He died young, leaving, besides other children, a daughter, Anne Vertue, who was brought up by her aunt, Mrs. Bodham. In 1803 Anne Vertue Donne married her cousin Edward Charles Donne, and William Bodham was the only child of this marriage.

Mrs. Bodham is worthy of mention as one of the poet Cowper's correspondents, and the lady who presented him with his "Mother's Picture," to which gift we owe the touching poem beginning, "Oh that those lips had language". It may be well to say here that this picture, being returned to Mrs. Bodham on the poet's death, came through her adopted daughter into the Donne family, and is still in their possession.

What little store W. B. Donne set by his ancestors will be seen later, *vide* the letter written to Bernard Barton, 29th September, 1839.

W. B. Donne's grandfather, on his father's side, William Donne, was a well-known surgeon in Norwich, noted for the number and success of his operations. He was a dapper little man, neat and particular as to his appearance, with beautifully shaped hands, of which he was very proud. As an instance of his fastidious habits, it is said that he required his medical pupils to furnish his desk with *new* quill pens every morning. When he married, the *Norwich Mercury* announced it thus: "26th May, 1759, married last week Mr. William Donne, Surgeon, to Miss Barnwell; an agreeable lady, with a handsome fortune".

In February, 1763, Mr. William Donne was admitted to the freedom of the City of Norwich. A miniature of this grandfather was presented by W. B. Donne to the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital on 10th September, 1845. Many years after, this same miniature was found in a drawer by Mr. Charles Williams, one of the surgeons at the hospital, but the likeness was almost obliterated. He took immense pains to get a copy reproduced from other paintings in the family, and in 1890 presented a

DR. WILLIAM DONNE

charming little oil painting to the hospital, with the following letter, dated 6th September, 1890:—

"Sir,

"I am desired to present to the hospital a portrait of Mr. William Donne, who was one of the first surgeons appointed to the hospital in 1771. He held this position for thirty-two years. Mr. Donne performed the first operation for stone in this building, and operated on forty out of the first fifty cases admitted—in all, he operated on 172 patients for that disorder, a number not yet exceeded by any of his successors. Sir Astley Cooper once stated that when a boy he saw Mr. Donne operate at the Norwich Hospital, and this incident gave him the first desire to become a surgeon.

"I am, Sir,

"Your obedient Servant,

"CHARLES WILLIAMS."

Edward Charles Donne, the son of the above William Donne, and father of W. B. Donne, was born in 1777. He was an M.B., and a Fellow of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. For some years he followed his father's profession in Norwich, but, owing to ill-health, he retired young. As we have seen, he married his cousin, Anne Vertue Donne, and settled down for the rest of his life at South Green House, Mattishall, a property in Norfolk, which belonged to Mrs. Bodham, and which she afterwards left to his wife. It is said that Edward Charles Donne might have sat for the original of old Mr. Caxton in Bulwer-Lytton's novel of that name, even to his tame duck, and also in the fact of his always being engaged in writing a book which never was published. He was a man of considerable literary instincts and conversational powers, kindly, generous, unselfish and unworldly. Indeed, both parents possessed abilities above the average. From his mother W. B. Donne inherited his marked individuality and keen sense of humour, his intensely chivalrous nature and tenderness of heart. The only child of

Mr. and Mrs. Edward Donne—William Bodham Donne—was born at Mattishall, 29th July, 1807. There is little to recall of his early years. At the age of seven he was sent to the Grammar School at Hingham, a few miles from his home, but schools were in those days rough places for delicate boys, and after a bad attack of bronchitis, brought on from exposure, his parents had to remove him. W. B. Donne remained at Mattishall for the next five years, but after his father's death, in 1819, he was sent to the Edward VI. Grammar School, at Bury St. Edmund's. Here he boarded with one of the Masters, the Rev. J. Shore, the father of Arabella and Louisa Shore, whose poems have lately been republished. The Head Master of the Grammar School at this time was Dr. Benjamin Heath Malkin, a remarkable man, and an excellent scholar, and under him W. B. Donne laid the foundation of the sound classical knowledge which distinguished him in after life. Among his schoolfellows were, besides the sons of the Head Master, the Romillys, John Mitchell Kemble, James Spedding, Edward FitzGerald, and many others who afterwards made their mark in the world. Several of these went up to Cambridge with Donne in 1826. But between school and college W. B. Donne seems to have read with a tutor, the Rev. — Williams, of Thornham, near Bury. This Mr. Williams was a friend of Charles Lamb, and, indeed, it was at his house that Emma Isola (Lamb's adopted daughter) was once taken very ill. When she was recovered sufficiently to travel, Lamb came to fetch her back to Enfield, and it was on this occasion that he made the celebrated speech when asked by a fellow-passenger as to the prospects of the turnip crop, that he believed it depended "on the number of the boiled legs of mutton".

Charles Lamb once expressed his desire to see W. B. Donne, and left a message for him with Mr. Williams to that effect, but for some reason or another the meeting never took place. Mr. Donne was a devoted admirer of Charles Lamb, as will be seen in the correspondence, and always regretted that he never

saw him. When he left Thornham William Donne went to Cambridge, and entered at Gonville and Caius College, the college of his forefathers. He speedily became popular among the reading men of his day, both on account of his ability and of his ready wit. A good example of the latter, which belongs, however, to some years later, may be given here. It is mentioned in Sadler's *Life of Crabb Robinson.* Mr. Donne was invited to dine at *Trinity* College, and during dinner a discussion took place as to what to call a handsome snuff-box which had recently been presented to Trinity College. Some one turned to him and said, "Donne, what would you call it?" "Well," he said, "taking into consideration the *name* of the college, I should call it 'Qui cunque Vult'".

It was about 1824-27 that the "Apostles"[1] Club was formed, called so from the original number of members having been twelve. It included such names as Monckton Milnes (Lord Houghton), James Spedding, John Sterling, G. Venables, Richard Chenevix Trench, J. W. Blakesley, John Mitchell Kemble, W. B. Donne, F. D. Maurice, J. Sunderland, Charles Buller and Spencer Walpole, and a little later Arthur Hallam, Alfred Tennyson, Charles Merivale, W. H. Thompson, H. Alford joined.

These young men, and others who from time to time were admitted among "the Apostles," agreed, on leaving Cambridge, to dine together once a year. This gathering is referred to many times in Mr. Donne's letters, and more than once he was their Chairman.

On leaving the University W. B. Donne went back to Mattishall, where his mother still lived, and, I am told, devoted himself to regular and methodical study. He made himself master of the finer English Literature, more especially of the drama, and no doubt his intimacy with the Kemble family led him to interest himself more particularly in that branch of reading. He was also a fine classical scholar and well versed in classical history

[1] Its own and proper name was "The Cambridge Conversazione Club".

and antiquities. He left the University without taking his degree, having conscientious objections to signing the XXXIX Articles, and although, as will be seen, he tried to remedy this a year or two later, to his great regret it was never accomplished.

It is at this time that Mr. Donne's correspondence begins, and no further introduction is therefore necessary.

CATHARINE B. JOHNSON

WELBORNE,
E. DEREHAM,
March, 1905

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WILLIAM BODHAM DONNE

John Mitchell Kemble [1] *to W. B. Donne* [2]

CAMBRIDGE
JAN. 13, [1829]

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

. . . . . .

Your determination has been a matter of great concern to your friends here, as it involves the certainty that many of them have parted from you for a long period perhaps for ever; no trifling or easily supported sorrow, when mutual respect and admiration have been the basis of a friendship which longer conversation would have matured and which even in its infancy has been the source of so much profit and happiness. To me your premature retirement from among us does not present so uncheering an appearance. We at least shall meet again. I shewed your letter both to Trench and Blakesley. From the first I have no concealments, and will you let me confess it, I thought your letter too honourable to yourself, too characteristic of your own excellent and manly spirit, to deny

[1] John Mitchell Kemble, son of Charles Kemble, was born 1807, educated Bury St. Edmund's Grammar School; Trinity College, Cambridge. Studied in Germany under the brothers Grimm, devoting himself to archæological and philological research. Author of *Beowulf* (1832), *The Traveller's Song*, *Review on Yäkel*, *Codex Diplomaticus ovi Saxonici*, *Saxons in England* (1849). Editor of *British and Foreign Review*, 1835-1844. Succeeded his father as Examiner of Plays, 1840. Died 26th March, 1857. A bust of him is in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge.

[2] As the letters of J. M. Kemble, Mrs. Fanny Kemble, and Edward Fitz-Gerald, scarcely ever record the date of the year, I have only been able to place them approximately.—ED.

myself the gratification of imparting to the second some of the admiration which I felt for you.

. . . . . .

I shall feel the distance between us immeasurably lessened if you will vouchsafe now and then a letter to

Yr. most affectionate friend
J. M. KEMBLE

J. M. Kemble to W. B. Donne

WEYBRIDGE
AUG. 25, 1829

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have used you I fear but scurvily in not writing a syllable to you during all this long period of separation. However all the stuff which at present lies jumbled topsy-turvy in my lumber closet of a head, shall be yours, à bon marché, *viz.*, the price of postage.

What comes first? Edmund Kean—very true; my Father has engaged him for Covent Garden next season, and with him and Young, my Governor ought to be able to make somewhat of a show.

You know perhaps that my Father is coming to play for a few nights at Norwich; I know not if the time will suit me, or I would come down with him and have an opportunity of seeing you.

The Theatres being shut I have little Theatrical Intelligence for you: Boaden has written a Life of my Aunt Mrs. Siddons, for which I sincerely wish I had an opportunity of kicking him: upon my honour. I am just as well qualified to write the Life of the Khan of Tartary, or Prester John. Does it not strike you as something abominable that such a fellow should perfectly unauthorized sit down, to scribble on a subject of all others the most ticklish, when in addition to the drawback of knowing nothing whatever of his hero, he adds that of knowing very little more of his own language?

You left Cambridge before the Declamations came out: you will therefore be glad to hear that I am one of them. As

follows:—1st Kemble 2nd Airy 3rd Chatfield. Who in the name of wonder would have thought of seeing Airy in possession of a prize for English composition.

Yr. affect. friend
J. M. KEMBLE

[William Airy, brother of the Astronomer Royal, was a school-fellow of Kemble, Donne, and Edward FitzGerald, at Bury; afterwards Vicar of Keysoe.]

Before going to Spain Trench had stayed at Mattishall, and had been much struck with W. B. Donne's mother and Aunt "Bodham" with their "gentle voices that are musical".

The following lines were sent to W. B. Donne by Trench in a letter dated "Escorial, Oct. 18, 1829" (see *Trench's Memorials*, vol. i., p. 36):—

To W. B. Donne

Like Merlin or some gentler wizard, I,
By the most potent rod of memory,
Now conjure up your form. Before you lies
Some antique volume, learned, quaint, and wise—
Browne, or Montaigne, with hidden meaning good,
And riddles worthy to be understood.
Hard nuts, but with rich kernels, such as grow
But rarely on the tree of Knowledge now.
For ours is the late Autumn of old Time;
The tree is sapless, and has past its prime,
And we pick up blind windfalls. Or, again,
You are beholding o'er the grassy plain
The West, that is o'erflown with golden streams
Of sunlight and the occidental beams,
Which pierce like shafts of fire the burning clouds
That lie beneath, while others, like the shrouds
Or biers of their dead selves, are borne away,
Emptied of light and glory from the day.
Or, better still, you listen to the fall
Of gentle voices that are musical,
Because the music of all gentle thought
Attunes them there. Thus wisely you have wrought.
These are the triple fountains, whence doth flow
All that is beautiful below.

At the end of 1829 Donne went to London to be introduced to the Kemble family. It was during this visit that John

Sterling,[1] who was editor of the *Athenæum*, persuaded William Donne to send him something for that paper, and he accordingly wrote four articles which appeared under the heading of "Shades of the Dead": (1) Sir Thomas Browne (25th Aug., 1829); (2) Montaigne (x.); (3) Burton (viii.); (4) the Hebrew Prophets, and with these Donne made his début in print. Trench says of the article on Sir Thomas Browne in a letter to Kemble (see *Trench's Memorials*, vol. i., p. 46), "You have probably seen his (Donne's) articles on the humorists. I have seen but one on Sir Thomas Browne. It is wonderful. I did not dream that he possessed such power. Admiring as I always did, his genial criticism and perception of Beauty, which I believed was unerring, which in him seemed more an instinct than anything more artificial, I yet believed his mind was rather for the *interpretation* than *creation* of Beauty. I joyfully recant my heresy."

In a letter to Trench W. B. Donne gives his impressions of the Kembles and of Miss Fanny Kemble, who had nobly come to the rescue of her family and was then making her first appearance in public.

DEC., 1829

MY DEAR TRENCH,

. . . . . .

What an enchanting family is Kembles'! Mr. Charles Kemble was absent much to my sorrow all the time of my visit, but I left Mrs. Kemble with no common feelings of regret. I never met with any one whose education and circumstances have been necessarily artificial with so young a heart, and such birth-freshness of feeling and thought. I think too that his sister (Fanny) is *his* sister by more ties of affinity and worthiness than birth and parentage.

. . . . . .

Miss Kemble's "Juliet" creates such sensation in London that Drury Lane, I understand, is saved from emptiness, and blank cheques, by the over-flowing of Covent Garden.

[1] John Sterling born 20th July, 1806, educated Glasgow; Trinity College, Cambridge, 1824; Trinity Hall, 1825-1827. Editor of *Athenæum*. Ordained Deacon, 1834, and Curate to Very Rev. Julius Hare, Archdeacon of Sussex, Rector of Hurtsmonceaux. The friend of Carlyle, who wrote his life, as also did Archdeacon Hare. Author of *Arthur Coningsby* (1833), *Poems* (1839), *Strafford* (1843). Founder of Sterling Club, 1838. Died at Ventnor 18th September, 1844.

FANNY KEMBLE
1830

In another letter to Trench, dated 29th April, 1830, speaking on the same subject, Mr. Donne says:—

The audiences are liberal in their applause and the press runs over with it, yet neither one nor the other, to my feeling, have solved the problem of her genius, *viz.*, her ideality of impersonation. I hope we may one day sit side by side in Covent Garden and we will talk the matter over.

Then he goes on to say:—

Did you know Charles Tennyson at Cambridge? He has published a little volume of sonnets of great beauty.[1] His imagination is of the right mould—a strong graft on Wordsworth and a fine outgrowth of healthy feeling; but he wants your fine moral sensibility to the force and integrity of single words. Kemble has been keeping terms at Cambridge. He wrote me a most affectionate letter to explain his sudden resolution of taking Orders, and his present studies and feelings with them in prospect. He will be a bright and burning light in God's Church.

My Mother desires her best remembrances.

Yr. very affectte. friend
W. B. Donne

We may mention that the sonnet to "J. M. K.," published in Lord Tennyson's *Works*, is addressed to John Mitchell Kemble, and was written at this time. He, however, never took Holy Orders, devoting himself instead to the study of the Law, and becoming later entirely engrossed with Anglo-Saxon and Philology.

Cambridge, 1830

My dear William,

We have been acting here most "vylanislie yll". Conceive a party of large and logger-headed fellow-commoners playing "Much Ado About Nothing". Conceive Milnes doing the elegant and high-minded Beatrice like a languishing trull; also if you can, conceive Hallam and myself setting our faces and taming our eyes into stupidity that we might present some

[1] *Sonnets by Charles Tennyson*, published by Bridges, Market Hill, Cambridge, 1830.

distant resemblance of Verges and Dogberry? I can assure you that if laughing be a criterion, no company ever did better, for from first to last, especially during the tragic scenes, the audience were in a roar. Milnes' Epilogue of which I keep you a copy was however very clever.

. . . . . .

I am compelled by the late hours of the night and somewhat of weariness also to close my epistle here, for my head goes something like an ill-regulated pendulum, or a french Metaphysician, now a nod then a bob, then the sense of an oscillation that's not quite right, then a start that makes wrong ten times more wrong.

Yr. affect. friend
J. M. KEMBLE

Another friend described those same theatricals. "Milnes[1] was manager of the concern," he says, "and in *propriâ personâ* (*credite posteri!*) played Beatrice! Thirlwall I verily expected would have died with most wicked laughter when Beatrice lifted up her veil, had he not laughed again and cured himself homœopathetically (if you cannot read you must spell). Kemble was Dogberry, and Hallam[2] took Verges; all three acted extremely well, but Kemble excellently except that he enjoyed it rather too much himself. An Epilogue by Milnes (extremely good) was tacked on."

The year 1830 brought with it great anxiety to W. B. Donne, for his two friends Trench[3] and Kemble had joined the unfortunate expedition to Spain under General Torrijos and nothing was heard of them for many months.

General Torrijos, a man of high honour and integrity, was one of several Spaniards who left their native land when the king set up a Despotic Government. They persuaded themselves that the country was ripe for a revolution, and that thousands would join them if they could only effect a landing on Spanish soil. They imagined themselves marching in triumph

[1] Richard Monckton Milnes, first Baron Houghton, 1809-1885. Assisted in the preparation of the *Tribune*, 1836; President of the London Library, 1882-1885.

[2] Arthur Hallam, 1811-1833, elder son of Henry Hallam, educated Trinity College, Cambridge, where he met the Tennysons. Died suddenly at Vienna, 1833. Buried at Clevedon. His *Remains* published 1834.

[3] Richard Chenevix Trench, afterwards Dean of Westminster, Archbishop of Dublin, born 1807, died 1886.

into Madrid, forcing the king to submit to his Cortes, and promising from henceforth to rule by Constitutional means.

John Sterling espoused their cause warmly, collected money from the "Apostles," and induced Trench, Kemble and Robert Boyd, a young cousin of Trench's, to offer their services. John Kemble went before them to Gibraltar to organise the rising, and here he waited in anxious expectancy for his friends. They were long in coming, for their ship had been boarded just on the eve of starting, and Trench, Torrijos and his Spaniards saved themselves by jumping overboard. Eventually they arrived by different routes at Gibraltar, only to find the King of Spain prepared, the coast guarded, and a price set on the head of any one of them caught in Spain. Seeing that the cause was utterly hopeless, Trench and Kemble sorrowfully returned to England, leaving Robert Boyd, who refused to accompany them, and the other fifty-five.

The end of the story is a sad one. A Spanish officer persuaded Torrijos that he had only to land, and thousands were waiting to join him. The luckless general believed him and left Gibraltar with Boyd and his fifty-five men. They were chased and taken prisoners, and all were shot. Neither Trench nor Kemble could bear to mention the matter afterwards, and Donne, who knew young Boyd, shared their grief.

But although his men friends were out of reach W. B. Donne was not without congenial female companionship. His aunt, Mrs. Bodham, was not far off at the Cedars, Mattishall, and his cousin Catharine Hewitt, a niece of Cowper's "Johnny of Norfolk," a bright, clever, handsome girl, was living with her.

The two cousins had known and loved each other from childhood, and no one was surprised when they heard of their marriage on 15th November, 1830. Mrs. Edward Donne gave up her home at Mattishall to the young couple, and retired to Norwich. This meant diminution of income to a certain extent, and as W. B. Donne had no profession but that of a "poor gentleman," he turned his attention to writing in earnest and became a frequent contributor to reviews and journals of the highest character. A list of articles is added at the end of this volume which will show the diversity of subjects on which he wrote.

W. B. Donne's style was marked by great acuteness of thought and refinement of language. How remarkable his power of just criticism was, is shown by the way his friends sent him their manuscript and made alterations according to his suggestions. Among others Dean Merivale sent him all the proofs of his *Roman History* to revise, and John Kemble the same with his *Saxons in England*. Archbishop Trench valued his advice

greatly, and on more than one occasion asked for information. In giving it, Donne could not help sometimes "hoaxing" his friends.

When collecting "Proverbs" for his book Trench asked him if he could think of any others to give him. "Have you this one," said Donne, "'No fool so big but there's a bigger at his funeral'?" "No," said Trench, and proceeded to write it down, when something made him look up, and catching the twinkle in his friend's eye, he taxed him with inventing that "Proverb," which Donne could not deny.

Trench and Kemble returned from Spain in 1831 and both visited Mattishall; but few letters are preserved. One there is from Arthur Hallam, who was still at Cambridge.

Arthur Hallam to W. B. Donne

JAN. 29TH, 1831

MY DEAR DONNE,

Your brace of kind letters should have been answered long ere this, had I not been labouring under the horrors of graduation. As an incepting Bachelor I can now thank you at my ease, and with all the increased dignity imputed by the benediction of a Vice Chancellor, and the commendation of the Father of the College. It gives me great pleasure that you should find anything to like in the very hasty compositions I sent you. They are, I fear, full of errors of language, and contain a few in substance, which I might have corrected, had I not just then been obliged to stand upon my ps and qs. If you have flattered me in the good opinion you express I shall punish you as Authors usually do by the "Cras altera mittam".

Towards the end of the year I may have ready for the Public (alas! most incurious of such things!) a translation of Dante's Vita Nuova, prefaced by some biographical chatter, and wound up by some philosophical balderdash about poetry, and morality, and metre and everything. If in the interim you have any views on any of these subjects, which you can charitably spare, suggestions will be thankfully received. I am about to become a nominal student of law, but unless ministers think fit to pull down the national credit along with their imbecile selves, I have not much thought of practising. The life I have

always desired is the very one you seem to be leading, a wife and a library—what more can man, being rational, require, unless it be a cigar? I am not however without my fears that the season for such luxuries is gone or going by: in the tempests of the days that are coming, it may be smoking, and wiving, and reading will be affairs of anxiety and apprehension.

Trench considers a man, who reads Cicero or Bacon nowadays, much as he would a man who goes to sleep on the ledge of a mad torrent, and dreams of a garden of cucumbers. I am very glad he visited you at Cromer: it seems to have done both your hearts good; as for him, he was delighted with all about you. He is now deep in Types, but has hardly attained much composition: I fear the subject may run away with him; it is one which of all others requires judgement to restrain, and method to regulate. Nevertheless there is a re-active force in Trench which will not let him go far in error. I cherish the hope that he may do great and glorious service to the Truth in this its extreme agony. He tells me he has awakened you to some alarm concerning the St. Simonians those prophets of a false Future, to be built on the annihilation of the Past in the confusion of the Present. I too am alarmed at this gigantic organisation, and the facility with which France appears to imbibe the poison, but I cannot but confide yet in English good sense that it will repel them from these shores with indignant scorn. Should it be otherwise, better will it be for Chorazin and Bethsaida in the day of judgement than for us. The mission is come however and according to their instructions they are to call on Sir Francis Burdet and "the chief of the aristocracy," to tell them "that humanity marches"! Bless their five wits—what incurable fools Frenchmen are!

I hope our correspondence in future may have narrower gaps; my address will always be 67 Wimpole Street: are you never likely to be in the Wen?

Very sincerely yours
A. H. HALLAM

J. W. Blakesley[1] *to W. B. Donne*

TRIN. COLL., CAM.
JULY 2ND, 1832

MY DEAR DONNE,

Since you last heard from me I have been leading the same kind of life as before, reading, and taking pupils, and this same life will probably be my lot at Keswick where I sojourn during the summer. I hope to see a good deal of Southey and Wordsworth and Chauncey Townshend, who though no very great man himself has been thrown together with a good number of eminent ones. He is the author of some articles (three or four I believe in number) which appeared in Blackwood some time ago upon Wordsworth—which articles excited the wroth of the bard, so much, that he cut the critic! foolishly in my opinion.

Kemble is in town; he is reading law five hours a day (or at least was doing so before Alfred Tennyson came up to town, for now these five hours are consumed (together with much shag tobacco) in sweet discourse on Poesy) . . . and besides this he finds time to write Articles in the Foreign Quarterly and a book on Anglo-Saxon, without which he says no one can understand English and which he says no one can understand without understanding the other Teutonic dialects. The two Bullers are canvassing Liskeard in Cornwall for Charles; but the electors are so delighted with both, that they do not know how to divide them and are quite disgusted with the Reform bill for only leaving them one Member.

O'Brian and Martineau are here taking their M.A. and Spedding[2] for the purpose of reciting his Member's Prize Essay.

[1] Joseph William Blakesley, born 1808, educated Trinity College, Cambridge. Wrangler and third in Classical Tripos; Senior Chancellor's Medallist, 1831. Deacon, 1833; priest, 1835; and after being seven years tutor at Trinity College became Vicar of Ware, 1845; Canon of Canterbury, 1863; and Dean of Lincoln, 1872. He died in 1885.

[2] James Spedding, born 1808, died from effects of a cab accident in 1881. Educated at Bury St. Edmund's Grammar School. Hon. Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. He was first joint-editor with Mr. Ellis, and subsequently sole editor of Bacon's *Works* and *Life*; was also author of *Evenings with a Reviewer; or, Macaulay and Bacon.* He is the "J. S." to whom Tennyson addressed the exquisite poem beginning:—

> The wind that beats the mountains, blows
> More softly round the open wold;
> And gently comes the world to those
> That are cast in gentle mould.

Alfred Tennyson is going to bring out another volume of poems. Thirlwall stays at Cambridge during the Long Vacation to work at his History of Greece of which I hope to see a volume or two at Christmas if not before. Tennant is gone down to Edinburgh to canvass for the Professorship of English Literature at the High School of that Place. I sincerely hope he may get it, for he is a man of no fortune and his chance of a fellowship is I suspect very small.

Yr. sincere friend
J. W. BLAKESLEY

W. B. Donne to J. W. Blakesley

MATTISHALL
JULY 31, 1832

MY DEAR BLAKESLEY,

Your letter was a most welcome one, both as coming from you, and also in containing much information which, if left to the light of Nature, I might never have attained to.

Indeed one or two of my correspondents, who live wisely among the wise, imagine that I must needs, by some mystic law of progression, grow in grace and light as high as themselves; and indulge in a vein of hinting and allusion to things familiar to themselves, of which *I* till then never had an inkling, and in consequence much wit and some wisdom are lost to me, by being conveyed covertly.

But your letter especially delighted me because it contained a brief history of men and things which I most desired to have, and which in my solitude as respects my Cambridge friends, are the most delightful and interesting of subjects.

You describe your life as "studious" and "didactic" and considering you as an exemplary man I would mine were so too, *i.e.*, "studious". I hope I am "didactic". I should be, provided any one would consign a son or two to my care—my ambition savours like Prince Hal's of small beer, for I desire four or five pupils, not beyond the age of fourteen years, to bring up in the fear of God and reverence for the world as it was, and I trust will one day under some new dispensation again become.

I can hold out no especial praises of myself except that what

I know I will honestly communicate, and excepting my dear and respected old Master Dr. Malkin I am confident that I can teach much better than my own Tutors.

It is become a subject of much anxiety with me to relieve my Mother of some portion of the expense which I am obliged to impose upon her in my present circumstances. To the Church I have no inclination and were I to study for any of the other professions, I should probably exhaust my income in preparation and after a few years of study were passed have no longer any pressing occasion to practise either in law or physic. Besides the evident inconvenience of breaking up a mode of life which I deliberately adopted, and have never had an hour's reason to repent of.

With half a dozen pupils for a few years I could earn an independent income, continue my own studies, and lay aside the charge, whenever the necessity for it, shall cease.

I conclude you amalgamate kindly with the great men of the Lakes: for the presence of an intellectual man, their junior, and bred up in the faith they teach, must be a cordial and cheering thing to the veterans, after struggling with popular noise and strife. Do they bear patting well? and are they so wise and good in their own country, as well esteemed out of it?

I yesterday made the attempt to disturb the repose of Vipan,[1] and draw from him whether he is in Germany or England, whether he is unsphering the spirit of Plato, or uncorking the spirit of wine? or in short whether "the young gentleman according to fates and destinies and such odd sayings, is indeed deceased, or in plain terms gone to heaven". He is a complete silk-worm shrouding himself in a costly mantle of learning which is of no use to others unless they are at the pains of unravelling it themselves.

I am, your sincere friend
W. B. DONNE

[1] Vipan was one of a family of well-known brewers at Thetford, hence the allusion to the "uncorking of the spirit of wine". He was a scholar and friend of John Kemble, and travelled a good deal in Germany and Hungary. "Vipan" is frequently mentioned in Donne's correspondence; always with a certain amount of good-natured amusement at his devotion to homœopathy and the "Wasser-Kur".

J. M. Kemble to W. B. Donne

[1832]

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

I am engaged at this moment in editing "Beowulf," the oldest, finest, and hardest of the Anglo-Saxon poems; and one peculiarly valuable as being the only hero-poem they have left us, of any length. It is so mythic, that from that and other circumstances I am inclined to think it must have accompanied our forefathers into England. [Here follow several examples of old Saxon, Anglo-Saxon and old German words, proving a common origin.]

I think your verses, dear Willie, very beautiful especially the song, and congratulate both you and myself that you have found thus a new expression for your good and kindly feelings. The still voice of the heart is lost now-a-days amid the whirling of steam looms and the fluff of cotton-spinning jennies, yet it still speaks articularly to those who will hear it. Read over this "Love's dirge".

1

Love hath perished long ago,
Alas! and well-away;
Lay him in the cold ground low
Neath the ice and the crisp snow
And the wintry clay.
Where no earthly violets grow
Where no fresh Spring breezes blow
Peacefully
Let him lie
As the buried may.

2

When young hearts grew dull and old
Love pined and died
When the warm hand's grasp was cold
And the friend's eye strangely rolled,
What was left beside?
Lay him in the Wintry mould;
Few hearts yet his knell have knolled
Soon will they
Faint away,
Lay them by his side.

3

They were happy in his smile
As roses in fresh showers:
But he is slain by hate and guile,
They will follow; yet awhile
For a few sad hours
Pilgrims to a holy pile
They have wandered many a mile
Here to shed
O'er his head
All Life's withered flowers!

These were written in Spain, in a sad moment enough.

Alfred Tennyson is about to give the world a volume of stupendous poems, the lowest toned of which is strung higher than the highest of his former volumes. He has been in London for some time, and a happy time it was; a happy time and a holy time, for it is the mighty privilege of such men to spread their own glory around them, upon all who come within the circuit of their light, and to exalt and purify them also. We had a fine reunion of choice spirits of an evening then; Hallam, Edward Spedding and his brother, the two Heaths, and Merivale, the kindest hearted and one of the mildest of scoffers; and amongst them Fanny's "Star of Seville" first read. This was well was it not?

Hallam and Tennyson, influenced principally I believe by my descriptions, then went upon the Rhine, whence they are just returned. Arthur has written a beautiful scene on the subject of that charming picture of Rafaelle on the Fornarina of which you must have seen prints.

I rejoice to hear that your young traveller in evil ways thrives; by this time, I trow, he has found of what dough the world is baked, and squalls lustily. Do not begin teaching him too soon. Method and system belong to the philosophic period of life; its beginning should be as vague as the child's own mysterious curiosity.

There was much wisdom in old Johnson's growl, "How educate your boy, Sir?" "Why, turn him by himself into your library." Yet there is a wider and lovelier library where knowledge, the best of it, love and admiration insensibly steal upon

the spirit; I mean that great library of God's own collection, the World. A child loves to hear of birds, and beasts, and trees; give yours a dog, if you wish him ever worthy to read Plato; the two are noble creations and soon learn to love one another.

. . . . . .

Your affect. friend
J. M. KEMBLE

The child referred to in the above letter was John Kemble's future son-in-law, Charles Edward Donne. He was born 21st May, 1832, and was the eldest of W. B. Donne's six children. Archbishop Trench stood as one of his sponsors and wrote a "Poem to his Godson," published among his *Works*, beginning, "No harsh transition Nature knows".

W. B. Donne was a fond and devoted parent and was always a prime favourite with children, although, when his fourth child was born, he wrote to Trench saying—

Pray how soon may Papa's begin to calculate the number of their offspring? The first is of course mere and unmixed jubilation. The second is a godsend that the first may not be a spoilt child—so far so good—but the third? I had my doubts—and felt (did you?) a sort of wryness and constriction at the ends of my mouth when it amounted to a Holy Alliance! Moreover our friends make their congratulations in a lower key, and do not keep up one's spirits as well as at first. Have any of the "Apostles" besides myself four children? as I should like to confer with him or them as to the proper comportment and frame of mind upon making up the "parti carrée".

Yr. affect. friend
W. B. DONNE

J. M. Kemble to W. B. Donne

CAMBRIDGE
JUNE 22, 1833

DEAR WILLIE,

I should have thought you knew me well enough not to imagine that I should leave England without at any rate letting you know where a letter would find me. I have never stirred from Granta since I saw you, save to bid my Mother

good-bye on her leaving England. My abroad-scheme seems for this year magnificently floored; I patiently submit to my misfortune and continue my Dictionary.

At the date of this present writing all Cambridge is in a bustle; the British Association for the Advancement of Science (or something or other) meet here on Monday, and the strangest whelps are parading our streets, that Cantab ever imagined. I wish to heaven (Pray do not read this part to Catharine) you could shift the married man off your shoulders for a week and come over to us;[1] I will breakfast and dine you, and bring you acquainted with all the scientifics I know, who are in fact the Scientifics of Trinity; and we will have some magnificent converse with Hallam and the Tennysons who in all human probability will be here; and with Whewell and Thirlwall and Sedgewick, than whom none better. The fragments I sent you are superb; and you are far as I can see quite of my own mind, ergo, quite right, about Ælfred's alterations; what in the name of all mischief could he mean by changing in the Lotus Eaters, "Full-faced above the valley stood the moon" into "Above the valley burned the golden moon"? except that some d—— friend or other told him that the full moon was never seen while the sunset lingered in the West; which is a lie, for I have seen it in Spain, and in the Lotos Land too! Then again what think you of the "tusked sea-horse" for the "broad-maned sea-horse"? Here also some *stumpf* told him that the Walrus or sea-horse had no mane; as if he and you and I do not know very well that he never meant the Walrus or any such Northern Brute, but a good mythological, Neptunian charger! But Ælfred piques himself upon Natural History, for which may a sound rope's end be his portion.

Yr. affect. friend
J. M. Kemble

[1] We do not know if William Donne was able to accept the invitation to Cambridge contained in the foregoing letter from Kemble, nor whether Arthur Hallam met him there; if so, it was for the last time, for in a few months the news came of Hallam's death in Vienna.

Alfred Tennyson, as is well known, was looking forward to Arthur Hallam's becoming his brother-in-law, and the grief at his friend's untimely death found expression in that noble poem "In Memoriam".

W. B. Donne to R. C. Trench

MATTISHALL, E. DEREHAM
OCT. 23, 1833

MY DEAR TRENCH,

Your letter was indeed a severe shock to me. I did not write in reply, for you were sure of my fellow-feeling with yourself and with all our friends; and had the case admitted of any consolation from without, I had no sources of it in myself, with which you were not already more fully supplied. I am anxious to know how the most afflicted at this heavy time bear themselves, poor Miss Tennyson and Mr. Hallam. I am not aware whether he has another son, and even so, hardly of equal promise with him who is taken away. You suppose me to have guessed at the cause of his death. Was he, then, liable to a determination of blood to the brain? Most dearly do I prize a very few letters written by him, and he had been most kind and courteous in sending me what he printed. And I had fondly hoped, some day, to have renewed and increased my brief acquaintance with him. Hallam had not come to Cambridge until just before I went away. I have never been there since, and only when visiting James Spedding in London in '29 have I ever been in company with him.

I cannot therefore claim so entire a sorrow as you and others feel; yet I am truly sensible of a heavy loss to myself, to our generation. We must be more earnest workers, since the labourers are fewer.

Yr. affect. friend
W. B. DONNE

W. B. Donne to R. C. Trench

DEC. 10, 1834

. . . . . .

Of our common friends I can tell you nothing. Kemble has shunned all communication with me since he went to Germany. I suppose he is so absorbed in etymological bliss with Grimm, that he can spare no thought for Christians and ordinary men like myself.

Spedding is in the North and though not "cold friends to me, what does he in the North" exactly? Yet he is also so engaged with Wordsworth's company, cigars, and the rudiments of German that our correspondence takes long naps.

To the Same

FEB., 1835

MY DEAR TRENCH,

. . . . . .

Have newspapers or letters recorded the death of Charles Lamb? "There's a great spirit gone" a prophet's mantle not soon to be caught nor lightly worn again. He wrought as effectually in restoring a large and braver spirit of feeling and of criticism in England as Wordsworth himself. He should have an Epitaph over him like "O rare Ben Jonson"; common epicedia will not suffice; and who shall write his life and limn his spiritual lineaments?

. . . . . .

Yr. affectte. friend
W. B. DONNE

Mrs. W. B. Donne, always delicate, was recommended change of air, and the following letter, also to Trench, explains how they were able to leave Mattishall. It is written from Cromer.

JUNE 1ST, 1835

MY DEAR TRENCH,

I am an exile and an outcast—Mattishall is "Let" for nine months to His Majesty's Assistant Commissioner under the new Poor Law Amendment Act, to that doughty Captain, the friend and crony of both "the Bears" greater and less, the great hyperborean, Knight of the North Pole, Sir Edward Parry.[1] Here is promotion! pray heaven the Poor wreak their

[1] Sir William Edward Parry, 1790-1855, Rear-Admiral and Arctic explorer, commanded expeditions in search of North-West Passage, 1819, 1820, 1821, 1824, died, 1855.

When Sir Edward Parry arrived to open negotiations for the "letting" of Mattishall, he went up to Mrs. Bodham's parrot and spoke to the bird. Polly looked at him, cocked her head on one side, and said, "Ship ahoy! my lads! ship ahoy!" As the great explorer was not in uniform, it was thought remarkable that the bird should have recognised him to be a sailor.

vengeance on his person, and not on my bricks and mortar. And we have taken refuge here to consider and to enquire. I do not wish to remain in Norfolk, as it would be a poor exchange from a good house to that which is worse without any compensation of better society, healthier air or more books.

. . . . . .

Yr. affect. friend
W. B. Donne

After three months at Cromer the Donnes corresponded with Mr. Trench, with a view to spending some months near him at Southampton, but, as William Donne wrote on 8th August, 1835,

My dear Trench,

Certainly he that moves with wife and children and other appendants furnishes another case for Solomon's catalogue of vanities; and one that apparently did not come within his proverbial experience, for we do not read that he ever travelled with his thousand ladies further than to the Hebrew Windsor, or Brighton!

I am anxiously expecting your "accouchment" and have made it known where I could to such at least as will welcome the Book, and read it worthily; for with all your powers, I will not promise you such immediate popularity as the Author of "Satan"[1] or of "Pelham"[2] rejoice in; you must be content with inferior honours of Wordsworth or Coleridge!

Yr. affect. friend
W. B. Donne

The book referred to in the above letter was the *Story of Justin Martyr and other Poems*, by Richard Chenevix Trench, Perpetual Curate of Curdridge, Hants. Moxon, 1835. First edition. This was Trench's first volume of poetry. In his

[1] Rev. Robert Montgomery, born 1807, died 1855, a popular and eloquent preacher, was nicknamed "Satan" after a poem he wrote called "Satan," published in 1830.

A clergyman once, after preaching in a city church, made some remark on the small congregation and the scantiness of the collection. "It's not so bad, Sir," said the old clerk, "considering Satan's preaching over the way."

[2] *Pelham*, a novel by Edward Bulwer Lytton, born 1803, died 1873. It was published in 1828.

Memorials the author says, "The first of many works and the most cared for by the Author".

On receiving the book, William Donne wrote to thank Trench, and after giving his opinion on it as a whole he says:—

Meanwhile who changed for the worse the sonnet "I stood beside a Pool"? who wrote "the cloudy wind" for the "cloudy platforms of the wind" as my MS. has it? Why did you not publish a few Spanish Translations, and wherefore omit a "Sonnet to the Moon" I have by me?[1]

W. B. Donne to R. C. Trench

THETFORD
Nov. 11, 1835

MY DEAR TRENCH,

. . . . . .

I discovered in this capital of brewers and millers, and single old ladies of both sexes, what ought to constitute me Burgess for life, and entitle me to a Butt of Ale yearly. I discovered that about a century since, some good man forseeing I suppose that I should come hither and want them, had left in the free school Chamber a small library of Books; a very small one indeed, but portly and sound and perhaps as he also foresaw exactly the books that I want to read and run over with my fingers, not for their main contents but for their indirect and

[1] In the new edition of his poem, published in 1836, Trench altered the line "cloudy platforms of the wind" to the "cloudy wind". The "Sonnet to the Moon" is not to be found in Trench's *Works*, but it is copied into a manuscript book of W. B. Donne's and runs as follows:—

SONNET TO THE MOON

Pale Moon, I gaze upon thy tranquil crest,
This weary night while pain clings near to me,
And fondly ask, do they that dwell with Thee
If Thou indeed hast dwellers, when opprest
And pained, gaze on our planet as a rest
Of quietude and beauty, even as we
When tempested on Life's unquiet sea
Deem thine the haunt and home of happy rest.
Oh may they hold this cheerful trust as I
Who would not for all knowledge let depart
The earnest faith and solace of my heart
While pondering on its sad perplexity
On all this evil of evil, that afar
Are tearless mansions in some happier Star.

collateral ones. We have Sir H. Savill's "Chrysostom" and Hieronymous and Cyril—so what with these and your kind loan of Augustine I shall get by the time that Winter is over, a little insight into what the "Fathers" will do for me, and not lose my time nor empty my purse in transporting or purchasing books. Not a soul knew of the books, saving the school Master, who saw them daily, but did not know what manner of things they were, and sundry incorporated mice and spiders who lived on the public stock, and complained of the Whig spirit of innovation that troubled their hereditary repose. Now as you had not when I was in your study a Chrysostom or a Jerome, you may like to have these cheap, and I have only to get some large flagstones backed and lettered "Hieronymi opera"—"Chrysostomi Opera" and put them up in the shelves, and I will undertake that no one finds out the exchange of stones for bread these hundred years.—Seriously however, if you have any questions to ask of Chrysostom, or any extracts for your red quartos, I shall be too happy to search and transcribe for you.

If you would see honourable mention of me and at the same time have a beautiful edition of Cowper, send for Southey's first volume, verily I have got for my services the lion's share of thanks and am satisfied accordingly.

Yr. affect. friend
W. B. Donne

Mr. Donne and his mother (who, as has been said, was cousin to the poet Cowper) had furnished letters and information to Southey when he was writing Cowper's *Life*. Cowper died on 25th April, 1800, at East Dereham, only five miles from Mattishall, and Mrs. Edward Donne and Mrs. Bodham had had frequent intercourse with the "Bard of Olney" and "Johnny of Norfolk" when they lived there.

The Donnes had also lent Southey some of the portraits which illustrate his volumes, namely, "Cowper's Mother's Picture" by Heins, Cowper, John Johnson and Catharine Johnson (Mrs. W. B. Donne's mother), all by Abbott; therefore when in a letter Mr. Donne says they were "faithfully exact," his testimony is equivalent to that of an eye-witness.

W. B. Donne to R. C. Trench

MARCH 6, 1836

MY DEAR TRENCH,

We are on the move from Thetford, and not having heard of a Tenant must return "en masse" to Mattishall, to separate into a smaller company on the first occasion. My own inclinations lead me to wish that the old birds remain there, and that ourselves either abroad, or in London, could find a place of less exile and solitariness than the heart of Norfolk. Unless you can enter into the proper occupations of a country life, which I am not depreciating, you are thrown out of the wheel-track and must either make a by-road for yourself, or remain behind. He who sits at his desk, and he who farms, and attends County Meetings, and Quarter Sessions, live in different worlds, which can never approximate, and had better for their several comforts, keep always asunder.

I should like London exceedingly as a residence, but without a calling to bring me in some "grist" it would not suit our means at present. I would do task work cheerfully, but having no interest, and there being such scrambling for clerkships in all offices, I am afraid my chance of employment is but a poor one. Sometimes such matters come round in unlookt for ways so keep a corner of your ear vacant if it be not pre-occupied by a better claimant.

Yr. affect. friend
W. B. DONNE

It must not be supposed by the above letter that Mr. Donne did not do his duty as a country gentleman, although he was never so contented as when among his beloved books, or quietly enjoying the happy family life around him. He not only visited the Union of the District once a week as a Guardian, but also taught a class of boys there, an unusual proceeding in those days.

His duty as a magistrate took up some of his time also. On one occasion two young fellows whom he had committed for trial for sheep-stealing were sentenced to transportation for life. It was proved that they belonged to a very ill-doing family, and it was a particularly audacious case; but there was something about the lads which appealed to William Donne's tender heart, and he could not dismiss them from his thoughts.

It happened the next week that Mr. Donne was the magistrate appointed to visit the prisoners in Norwich Castle (then used as a jail), and so came across the condemned lads again. They received him in sullen silence, and apparently took no notice when he implored them not to let this false step drag them down for ever, but to make up their minds to start afresh in the New World. It seemed as if they were hardening themselves against all good influences, and the pity of it all, and the youthfulness of both, touched William Donne, who had sons of his own. He went up to one and took him by the hand saying, "Well—good-bye. I shall still hope to hear good news of you both." At this the boy broke down, and sobbed out, "No gentleman has ever shaken hands with us before and no one has said a kind word to us. We will try, Sir, to do better—you have given us hope." Years after Mr. Donne received a letter from them telling him how fortunate they had been and how prosperous they were, and thanking him for his kind words.

W. B. Donne to J. W. Blakesley

MATTISHALL
SEPT. 2, 1836

MY DEAR BLAKESLEY,

I have seen Vipan within the last fortnight, for the first time since his return to England. He certainly ought to be exhibited by the Homœopathists as a walking advertisement for the benefit of their theory.

Being in England is to him a sort of St. Vitus's dance: he seeks rest, and findeth none: he is in London, and at Mattishall, at Thetford and at Weymouth within one period of 48 hours. Though a merciful man, he is not so to his beast, whom he drives about incessantly. I imagine all this "cacoethes eundi" leaves him when he crosses the water, as certain animals disappear at the equator: and that he moves in Germany with as much plan and purpose as ordinary men.

If I were justified in cutting any man for default of correspondence it is Kemble, who has not merely neglected writing to me for nearly two years, but has besides put me to the expense and trouble of writing to him at Munich, where I understand he had retired to take a little breath in the labours of courtship. I am at a loss how to deal with him. I would abuse him, but

Frau John understands English; and might take exceptions against me, did I send him a cartel instead of an epithalamium. I did look for him never to marry; but the shock of surprise was much milder than if it had been told me that Spedding or H. Romilly had sacrificed themselves to the good of posterity. For then I should entertain no doubt that the world was in dying circumstances and that everything, that had ever been foretold of portentous and prodigious, was close at hand.

I remain in hopes of no distant meeting by the sea, or inland,

My dear Blakesley

Ever sincerely yours

W. B. DONNE

Edward FitzGerald visited the Donnes towards the end of 1836. In a letter to Trench writing of this (16th Dec., 1836) William Donne says:—

His life and conversation are the most perfectly philosophic of any I know. They approach in grand quiescence to some of the marvels of contentment in Plutarch. He is Diogenes without his dirt. He confesses to so much ease, as to make it a question whether since he cannot find, he should not create for himself some salutary trouble, and consults me if he should marry, or open a Banker's Book. I advise him however to let well alone.

Vipan also made me two flitting invitations—although he pronounces England to be the best abode—an opinion which his account of Munich and Hungary, as far as regards economy, strangely contradict—yet all the while he is in it, he has a tarantula bite upon him, that will not let him rest, but leads him over "brake and over brier" in an old heavy gig, or on the top of a coach, like a man with an evil spirit. Should the cholera not cross his path, he talks of going after the Winter to Constantinople, and even to Asia Minor. "Were it not better done as tinkers use" to get a covered cart with a chimney, and move from place to place, leaving the pullers down, and the keepers up of England to fight their approaching battle, in dust and noise to their heart's content.

Yr. affect. friend

W. B. DONNE

John Kemble, after a long residence in Germany, where he was a pupil of the celebrated brothers Grimm, returned to England in 1836, having married Natalie Augusta, the daughter of Professor Amadeus Wendt, of Göttingen University. In a letter to Blakesley (23rd March, 1837) William Donne asks:—

Have you seen Kemble since from a citizen of the world he became the Editor of the British and Foreign Review? As far as good looks and spirits are tokens of well-being, he is a prosperous man, or was, no longer than last January, and if his letters may be trusted he is so still. For three times that I saw the Hausvater, I saw Frau John but once; and to pronounce upon a lady from one interview requires more decision of character than I possess—but both Mrs. Donne and myself are agreed in wishing to become better acquainted with her, thinking her a very nice person—and you know that ladies have *one* sense more than we have where character is concerned.

Yr. affect. friend
W. B. Donne

J. M. Kemble to W. B. Donne

3 Craven Place
Bayswater

My dear William,

You are a man made up of and nurtured upon the milk of human kindness; but you would do me great wrong if you supposed that you had been neglected all this while; *i.e.*, be it observed more neglected than any one else: before I married I was vagabondizing too much to write, and was indeed in no frame of mind to produce anything worth recording: and since marriage—my dear fellow, I am hardly over the honeymoon yet; have been pestered to death with the details of settling (that is the phrase is it not, for the period during which water passes from muddy to clear?); and am to boot Editor of the British and Foreign Review. You know not how much lies in that one word *Editor*. But I grumble not, for the original curse was, that man should eat bread in the sweat of his brow, and a damnable soup it makes, with reverence be it spoken. And now to answer some of your impertinent questions—Dost thou in the weakness of thy heart conceive so

ill of me, as to believe that I would give up, or in any way neglect Anglo-Saxon, Philology, and other branches of useful knowledge? Thou should'st know thy man better? Listen, mark how a plain tale shall put thee down: three days ago I sent to my printer the *last* sheets of Beowulf vol. 2 being about 5 sheets of philological, grammatical, and historical notes, whereat if the world do not wonder and amaze themselves—it is their look out, not mine. Moreover my Preface to the said vol. is really a good piece of work, and I praise it myself.

I wish you could persuade your wife to let you come up for a few days to London: I cannot offer you a room to sleep in, not having more than we occupy; but I will give you as many breakfasts, dinners, and teas as you like: my father is acting for the last season, literally taking leave of the public: and a private box you can have at all times, with or without us, as you will. Adelaide Kemble who sings as if she had taken lessons from the court-musician *la haut* (which of the angels has the office I know not, perhaps some of your country parsons may be better informed) shall sing to you: and Natalie Kemble who plays quite as divinely shall play to you. I have a garden where you may *schwärm*, and there are Kensington Gardens and Hyde Park at my very door, wherein you may take refuge should your *schwärmerei* become too big for your bosom, and your soul want elbow-room among the apples of my little Bayswater Paradise! I do not know if you see our Review. Bating our poetical taste which is execrable, and which I mean, as soon as I can, to reform altogether, we are as good, upright, and clever, as we are an honest periodical. This is not vanity, neither is it a joke! I am downright in earnest and the best proof that I am, is my having taken upon myself to be man-midwife to our wisdom.

Our foreign information is unrivalled; there is no periodical in Europe which knows so much as we do; no set of men in the world who so uncompromisingly act upon the knowledge they possess; so boldly tell the good and the evil of our times, and so determinately point to the path which Europe must follow if she would regenerate herself. I do not know if you are quite practical enough for us: I mean, whether you

JOHN MITCHELL KEMBLE

have sufficiently bored yourself with the questions of modern politics, to put your shoulder with us, to this spoke of the wheel; but there are many subjects of interest which no man could treat better, or more honestly than yourself, and right glad should I be to receive an article from you upon any such subject. I do not ask you to write about Roman History, because I do not think people care about such matters, and you know if you would make people take the *Absinthia tetra* of wisdom, you must condescend to give them some of the *mellis liquor* with it; *i.e.*, if you will give them physic, it is only fair that they should be allowed to choose what jam they will take it in; nor do I ask you to write about Buckwheat and Mangelwurzel because I believe heaven enlightened you when it led your mind away from Farming;—but it is my opinion that on many matters of home or foreign interest you could produce something which would do us all good; *viz.*, the reader by enlightening him, the writer by putting a handsome fee in his pocket, and the editor —? How the editor is to gain by it I do not very clearly see, except in the satisfaction he would derive from two such good deeds as those named above. If you would only come to us, we might talk over such matters and come to a more definite conclusion on the subject. Conversation with my wife, would improve your German; a short Ausflug, as the Teutons call it, would improve your health; and it is hardly to be doubted that conversation with myself would improve your knowledge and morals.

As to your hint that we should come and visit you at Mattishall—it only serves to show how little you, the waiters in the outer porch, know of what goes on at the altar! Why my good fellow, Prometheus himself was never tighter bound to his bit of the Caucasus, than I am to my Review: I have been, and am still, sitting amidst piles of proofsheets, revises, publishers' letters, authors' complaints, articles rejected, and articles accepted, but which the authors (from a modest feeling, perhaps, of their own incompetence to the task) have entrusted it to me to *translate* into respectable, and readable English for them. Still my dear Willie, I am as happy as the day is long and should be yet happier, could one or two of my dear friends look upon my

happiness. We have so long known one another, and so long loved one another, that though I do not believe there exists two men more unlike one another in mental qualifications, yet we have a most complete understanding of our mutual feelings, wishes, and hopes. You would laugh to see what an orderly husband I am become, and what a good little wife I've taken unto myself to keep me in the right way! Kindest remembrances to your Wife and Mother.

Ever affectionately thine

J. M. KEMBLE

The monotony and isolation of the country in winter and early spring was occasionally broken by the visit of some friend, and in 1837 the Donnes made the acquaintance of Bernard Barton, the Quaker poet, the neighbour, friend, and afterwards father-in-law of Edward FitzGerald. Introduced by the latter, he had asked to come and see certain pictures and "reliques" connected with Cowper the poet which were at Mattishall, and, being also a man with a keen sense of humour, he and his host found so many things in common that a sincere friendship was formed there and then.

Bernard Barton was a trifle exacting, and complained if his letters were left long unanswered, but the correspondence, now begun, was continued very regularly on both sides until "B. B.'s" death in 1849.

Edward FitzGerald of course was a link between them, and it is much to be regretted that in his lifetime FitzGerald destroyed all W. B. Donne's letters to him. No visitor was more welcome at Mattishall than "dear old Fitz," and the children loved him (the "Goths and Vandals" as he called them).

Mrs. Donne in one of her letters says, "he is a most agreeable person, laughter-loving and ever suited to make holiday. The children think so too and spare him not."

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

MATTISHALL

MAR. 25, 1837

MY DEAR FRIEND,

. . . . . .

Did you ever fall in with Hayley's Memoirs of Himself edited by the late Dr. Johnson of Yaxham? A copy for 5/- of two bulky quartos, whose original cost was two guineas, made me imagine (like the man who hearing a "lot"

going for three-pence added a bid because it must be cheap whatever it was at *that* price and for his pains got 1500 cwt. of damaged tobacco) that it could not be a dear book. But since I have cut the leaves and skimmed the pages—to read them is impossible—I am of opinion that if the paper is not worth a crown, I am out of pocket. So extraordinarily empty a man to set up for a fellow of mark and likelihood I never encountered in books or in life. His conversation and manners must have been the attraction in Hayley to Gibbon and Cowper, and these are not reflected in his Memoirs. He has not even a comic side to his oddities, but was in short the most lamentably fine gentleman on record. Trench's poems I am in daily expectation of—Tennyson's are not yet published. I am however rather dismayed at the title of the former—"principally from Eastern sources." I am in dread of parables, allegories, apothegms in verse, instead of broad pencillings of nature, the without and the within, and narrative. Trench keeps bad company. I do not mean that he drinks or drives coaches. But instead of reading Sophocles and Dante, he fills his brain with quaint poets and mystics and is more anxious to impresss a moral, than to create and stamp beautiful images. This which is very creditable to him as a Divine, is the wrong course for a poet. His book may dispel my apprehensions but except in the Bible, and in translations from the Hindoo and Sanscrit, I never read ten lines of Eastern poetry worth remembering ten minutes.

I must write a line to Moxon, and it is already past midnight, so with united best remembrances,

Believe me

Ever yours, most sincerely

WILLIAM B. DONNE

Edward FitzGerald[1] *to W. B. Donne*

BOULGE

MARCH 29, [1837]

DEAR DONNE,

I am just returned from London where I have been staying a month. A joyful month it was, for I found all

[1] Edward FitzGerald, 1809-1883, author of *Euphranor* (1851), *Polonius* (1852), *Six Dramas of Calderon* (1853), *Omar Khayyám* (1859), etc.

my friends there, unexpectedly, so that we had all kinds of delights, and smokings and sittings up.

The man you ask me about was there: Alfred Tennyson: he lives at No. 12 Mornington Crescent, Hampstead Road. He will not be long there: for his family has taken another house in Lincolnshire, very much to his sorrow. When I spoke to you of inviting him, you comprehend, I am sure, the tone in which I did so: half jokingly not seriously desiring you to fulfil a duty.

Letters look very grave, while all the time there is a smile on the writer's lips: nor will lines of writing represent the modulations of the voice that is speaking half in jest, and half in earnest. Perhaps one might write more intelligibly in waving lines on those recessions.

"*Why do you not ask Alfred Tennyson to your house?*"

This would at least characterise the wondering and uncertain mood of mind in which we often are: in which I am more than half my life, I believe. Seriously however, I think you will be much enriched with his acquaintance, and he with yours, and one wishes to bind together all good spirits and to dispose an electric chain of intelligence throughout the country. But I suppose I spoke of this chiefly from an instinctive desire we all have to share good things with those we love.

I know John Kemble and his wife, she is a very unaffected pleasing woman. They have a pleasant house at Bayswater, and John is as busy as possible and with all the vigour of mind and body, that I ever knew him possessed of—what a little concentration of energy it is.

Spedding is all the same as ever, not to be improved; one of the best sights in London.

Your ancestor's sermons are coming down into the country among other books. When next I go to Gelderstone, I will bring him thither and so forward him to you.

My plans of residence are not yet decided, for while my sister is here I cannot leave, and I do not know but that this may be my chief home for the future.

I have just found the 11th volume of Cowper, what a Trump is Southey to stick to the first edition of the translation.

As to your Theatricals, I did not wish you to leave Mrs. Donne, for I wished her to see my friend Mac[ready] as well as yourself. Some day or other we will all go together. Farewell my dear Donne.

I am yours ever

E. FG.

Boulge is appended to Woodbridge: now be honest and let Mrs. Donne know that she was in the right.

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

MAY 10TH, 37

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I deserve never again to have a letter from a poet, for delaying so long to answer your very kind one. But there is a tide in letter-writing, as well as in the affairs of men, that must be taken at the onset or the thing is nought. That I have just hit the critical moment I am by no means sure: but at any rate to write, even invitâ Minerva, is better than to allow you for a moment to suppose that I am not highly delighted with the prospect of our becoming regular correspondents henceforward.

Mrs. Donne will tell you how much she is pleased by your admiration of Trench. It is fortunate that I do not write verse, or I might be jealous of his reputation. He is however fully worthy of it, and though I think with his resources, and from his early promise that his poetry might be of a higher order if he would attend less to the individual workings of his own mind, and would look more boldly and steadily upon the great external worlds of nature and art, yet "Sabbation" is no ordinary volume, and is in itself a remarkable proof of the progress of poetic culture within the 19th century. Trench's imaginative resources are uncommon.

Mrs. Bodham is well, and desires her best remembrances may be given to every one who takes so kind an interest in her as yourself. I am very glad that Southey's Cowper appeared in

her life-time, as it has both given her pleasure and spread her name far and wide. And I know no one whose good qualities better deserve remembrance and celebrity. Charles Lamb should have seen her, and put her into Elia. Will not you perpetuate her in verse?

I heard from Edward FitzGerald a few days since. He is leading his usual philosophic life in London, *i.e.*, taking everything easily and making the most of whatever comes in his way, which if not philosophy is something quite as good. Some time since not being an angler himself, and not particularly affecting the company of rivers and standing pools, he nevertheless struck up an acquaintance with one who occupied himself by such waters [Mr. Browne, of Bedford]: and this amphibious friend proves, from his accounts, to be one of the most agreeable acquaintances possible. He has had him in London, introducing him probably to the Paddington canal and serpentine, and pointing him out to the humane society as a person that should be looked after.

I shall enclose this in a parcel, as Mrs. Donne will add a few lines of acknowledgement on her own account, and it will enable me to forward a letter found after your departure on the library table, but the seal being broken we concluded that it would not be necessary to forward it especially.

Let me once more assure you of the great pleasure your brief visit gave us and how much we desire its repetition, and believe me

Ever yours most truly
W. B. Donne

In June, 1837, Mr. Donne paid a visit to London and was able to be present at the "Apostles'" dinner. He says, in writing to Trench:—

I dined at the Pan Apostolic Dinner, and rejoiced at meeting again so many old friends and making I hope many new ones. Charles Buller was in the Chair, but something of his antique vein was gone, but as I went early perhaps I am no judge. Kemble fresh as a lark, prosperous, and happy. . . . . , I think of going up to Cambridge in October and taking my B.A.

degree; it will be more respectable than I am now, and though I could wish in spite of Maurice, that subscription were done away with, I think much more respectfully of the xxxix. than when I absconded—and would sign them even if they were forty.

And a month later in a letter to Mrs. Trench Mrs. Donne says: "William is about journeying to Cambridge for the purpose of engaging a ready furnished house, which may contain us all."

John Kemble writes at this time:—

I think you are quite right in taking your degree, if your scruples are not too strong. As for plucking, that is a good joke! only be *well* up in all your subjects; that is to say, solve six Euclid questions, answer eight Arithmetic and Algebra, construe twenty lines of Homer and twenty of Virgil, and give six answers in the Paley and Locke paper and you are safe. The only thing I fear for you is, that you will be so conscientious in your preparation for the awful Ordeal that you will come out at the head of the Poll, or something equally ridiculous. "Hoc tu Romane" or I may be tempted to exclaim "Tu Brute!"

Everything was arranged when Mrs. Donne fell so ill that the journey to Cambridge had to be given up, and we hear no more of the project. On 11th August, 1837, in a letter to Trench, Mr. Donne was able to say that his wife was nearly recovered and—

Next week we shall probably go to the sea. We are enjoined to keep company, and be merry, and joyful,—comfortable injunctions, but not so easy to follow, as the faculty may imagine, as it is not every sort of company that tends to exhilaration.

We have just had a rare treat in Lamb's Letters [he continues] published by Talfourd, if you can get them into your possession, by any means fair or foul, short of buying (they are dear and will perchance drop in price) they will repay your pains and time in reading them. I would not push either Coleridge or Wordsworth from their stools, but I insist on Lamb's having as high a seat, and being served at the same table with them. His mind moves in a different cycle from theirs, but its circumference is as full, and his wit pierces and lightens up the same depths that their wisdom fathomed. Moreover he has set the art of punning in its true light, and no possible Dr. Johnson in future

times, though twice as inert as the original Samuel, shall ever set his hard-headedness at the art any more—with regard to punning "opus operandum est," it is a science and degrees should be conferred for it.

Yr. affect. friend
W. B. DONNE

W. B. Donne to R. C. Trench

MATTISHALL, E. DEREHAM
DEC. 1837

MY DEAR TRENCH,

It is incumbent on you to return a very clear and full answer to a question I am going to put—and if you feel upon reading it any misgivings, as to your knowledge or capacity for answering, you must put it in the hands of Mrs. Trench. For it is not a common affair of life or death, but it is to know the best means of conveying to Botley, and afterwards to your insides, a Turkey, so that it may arrive sweet, and yet unsoiled by dissolution. "Mark not" the hour and the night, but the best coach for Turkeys from London, where it starts from in London, and how the said fowl may get from Southampton to Botley, together with all minor and adherent particulars necessary. Search the straw well for £1. 1. 0 which I shall put up with the beast, having been long so much in your debt for Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats.

I did at one time intend to have put the coin in the claw, that it might have been slipped like a fee into your palm at your first meeting; but Mrs. Donne says turkeys are packed with their claws out of the hamper and clasped as in prayer for deliverance from the wicker, so it is possible that some one might shake hands with the Turkey on the road, and finding it a guinea-fowl, anticipate you.

I have not written to you since it became my turn to congratulate you on your quadri-partite family. Perhaps however you have become indifferent to such congratulations, and think them less mannerly than troublesome. I can't quite agree with you in preferring girls to boys. There are a hundred ways of getting rid of the latter,—but only two of the former—*viz.*,

either dying yourself, an unpleasant remedy, or by their marrying and then there is some chance of their bringing into your family a fellow whom you can discover no reason for falling in love with: who ten to one crosses you in politics, or interferes with your habits or won't laugh at your jokes.

Well! I accept your dogma that *not* what a man *does*, but what he *is* is to be considered, and I ask you to apply it to Coleridge, not that I mean to do so myself, but to keep you off Lamb; who bating brandy and water and fine shag, was most exemplary in all his domestic relations. Let us take great men at their best, for we reap the fruits of what was best in them, and are not touched by their weaknesses, so we do not copy them; which is *our* fault if we do. Since we speak of great men, have you seen Kemble in his new habitation in London, and where is it?

I had hoped to have seen Blakesley at Xmas, but he is gorging a pupil with plus and minus, and after he has disgorged that, he is to fill him again with Greek and Latin. How be it Blakesley comes here in or about March, cannot you contrive to meet him?

We are very anxious to hear an improved account of Mrs. Trench, and a good one of your Trencheries. Give my best love to the only one who can have any dim recollection of my personal appearance, and with Mrs. Donne's best regards united with my own to Mrs. Trench and yourself

I am yours affectionately

W. B. DONNE

J. M. Kemble to W. B. Donne

1/27/38

MY DEAR WILLIE,

Pocket your money and hold your jaw, and never look a gift horse in the mouth even though his grinders should be better than you anticipated. In my private capacity, I do not mean to deny that I am your poor friend, but as Editor of the British and Foreign Review I am no man's friend, but a close, hardfisted chap who requires quid pro quo. The sum I assigned you was the one assigned by Beaumont in *his* scale; if you find

it liberal—so, if not, you may go and be—— only put the saddle on the right horse. You will observe that my talk is of horses: that comes of my trip to Yorkshire, where I spent ten as merry days as a gentleman shall wish to see. Beaumont asked me down to Bretton Park and knowing that a week's sporting would clear my upper works of cob-webs, I accepted. It was a jovial rollicking week as could be. Woodcock shooting all day, woodcock eating all the evening, oysters and mulled claret all night. Our history is as short as that of the Jewish kings, "we did what was good in the sight of the Lord,"—of the Manor. The party was nearly a family party: Lord Hawke, Lord Dudley Stuart and myself were the only auxiliaries.

What a beast am I for forgetting all this while to render thanks for your noble present! Do not think to humbug us Cockneys with satirical remarks about fat and lean Turkeys. We know a good Turkey when we see him, and if you have better in Norfolk than the fellow you sent me, I'll make six Lents successively on stock fish and barley water. My dear fellow he was imperial in his robe of oyster sauce.

Yr. affectionate friend

J. M. Kemble

W. B. Donne to J. W. Blakesley

Feb. 22, 1838

. . . . . .

We are only now returned to Norwich. The weather being such as to render anything beyond merely passive existence in one's own den quite impossible.

I derived a melancholy pleasure from paying my Christmas bills, writing history, and smoking, but as Sir Mark Chase says "that's all, Tom, that's all".

FitzGerald is solus in the great house at Boulge. He speaks of reading Plato, and of the "consolation of cigars" and says nothing about turnips and mangel-wurzel. He has however been taking his father's rents in Nottinghamshire, whether for the good of either party remains to be known.

Yr. affect.

W. B. Donne

For several years W. B. Donne had been collecting materials for writing a *History of Rome*, but Dr. Arnold of Rugby was first in the field. The next letter to Trench refers to this, and also to the poet Rogers' remark after reading Sir Walter Scott's *Life* written by his son-in-law, "I never thought Lockhart loved Scott, but now I know he hated him".

W. B. Donne to R. C. Trench

APRIL 16, 1838

MY DEAR TRENCH,

You are not I find without some spice of irony proper to your craft, and it appears in your asking after my "great work". "Be merciful great Duke to men of mould." That my labour in collecting materials has been, and is, considerable I admit, but that I have anything within me that will one day germinate into anything *great* I cannot feel.

I want two selves for such an undertaking; one I have in pretty good condition, the spirit of labour, and comparison; the other, that of construction is very meagrely given to me. I find composition difficult; to make it better I am very fastidious, and I am tormented with an idea I cannot realize.

Moreover if report be true, there is a rival, and no mean one in the field. Dr. Arnold of Rugby, who, it is said, meditates a complete "History of Rome" from U. C. (the foundation of the city) to the death of Antoninus the Philosopher.

This plan cannot indeed from its extent, be the same as mine, rather a "Welt pictur" than a history, but whatever it is, it will doubtless be so well executed as to leave little curiosity for the work of an inferior artist, in the public; and you know if two men ride on one horse, one must ride behind.

I quite agree with you as to the melancholy picture of Scott in Lockhart's biography, and Rogers' sarcasm may be a truth. Still I think that the desire of amassing money, and of making his genius serve to worldly ends alone, not to the higher aims of art, were but means to an ulterior object, not ruling and solitary principles in Scott.

Feudal state and power were the master idea in Scott's mind. He was a descendant of the Scotts' of Buccleugh, and as

arms and border-war would no longer uphold their greatness, he sought to found anew his lineage by literature, even as Columbus, with a more splendid but similar feeling, looked upon the discovery of a New World, but as the stepping-stone to the recovery of the Holy Land from the Infidels. Whatever were Scott's motives, his life is a remarkable proof of the vitality of genius, in overcoming and spiritualising even its earthliest incumbrances.

Yrs. ever
W. B. DONNE

Bernard Barton to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
APRIL 17, 1838

MY DEAR FRIEND,

. . . Art thou aware that Dawson Turner has a lithograph'd sketch of Mrs. Bodham, done I think by one of the Miss T.'s? I thought it, when he shew it me yester-morning, more like than Harvey's. The face is not so long, and I thought its expression more pleasing, as far as I could judge from memory. Pray remember me with most affectionate respect to the Original, I cannot attempt to describe my feelings as I sat by her during that brief hour or two. It was so like a dream that I could half persuade myself then and now, it was one. It almost seem'd for the moment, as if I had but to turn my head to see Mrs. Unwin on the other side, knitting. If becoming acquainted with thyself and Mrs. Donne were a pleasure at all inferior, it was only so from my having in fancy, known, envied and loved "Aunt Bodham," with as little hope of ever seeing her, in this world, as I should have cherished of meeting Lucy Hutchinson. That picture too, of Cowper's angelic mother! And the almost as fascinating one of *her* mother. Mrs. B. and B. too, by Abbott; his portrait of Cowper, and the un-forgetable one by Romney! How the memory of all these, and many more objects seen and talked about that morning haunts me. I can hardly yet persuade myself that I have been among you "in the body". I shall have to come again some day, to make assurance doubly sure, but when I dare not speculate. I fear it can't be this summer, for I have a

letter this morning to say I must go into Sussex, and I fear I must, for I have kinsfolk near and dear there, whom I have not seen these five years; but I may, I trust, hope to hear from thee; that would be something to corroborate my vision of Mattishall. I must to my figures to sober myself.[1] Kindest regards to Mrs. Donne.

Thy affectionate and obliged Friend,

B. B.

W. B. Donne to J. W. Blakesley

Ap. 20, 1838

My dear Blakesley,

Your proposal of coming is a most welcome one, and truly happy shall I be to see you.

Tennant wrote to me apprising me of his marriage, and averring in his own behalf that some years ago I wrote him an exhortation to that effect. I suppose I said "Get thee a wife Prince, get thee a wife thou art *melancholy*". But I have incurred, by such untimely pleasantry, a much heavier responsibility than I dreamt of. He translated a joke into earnest. I trust the event lieth not at my door. Dying men catch at straws, and marrying apostles seek to inculpate their brethren.

Can you not bring Milnes' poems in your valise? Trench had told me some time ago, that he (the hon^bl. Member) had written some very admirable poetry, but as Trench once in my hearing applied the same epithet to a cart-road, I did not give him much heed. I was however much struck with a ballad of Milnes' in the "Tribute". I will not forestall any of the pleasure I anticipate in having you with me by writing any more now.

Yr. affect. friend

W. B. Donne

W. B. Donne to J. W. Blakesley

Aug. 16, 1838

My dear Blakesley,

Greatly to my surprise, and pleasure, and increase of self-admiration, I received an invitation to become a member

[1] Bernard Barton, like Rogers the poet, was a banker by profession.

of Sterling's Deipnosophists[1] from Spedding, and as I answered immediately "Yea" I conclude I was among the great men chosen by acclamation. I could not help smiling at the goodly company I found myself in. He says, after reciting the Members names up to the time of his letter—"In addition to these it was proposed last meeting to invite the following gents to become members". Among them are first and foremost

W. B. Donne! Thirlwall. Allan Cunningham.
G. C. Lewis. R. C. Trench. Sir Francis Palgrave
and Marshal Soult.

Saving of myself, to whom nothing worth recording has befallen, I have no news to tell you—for a dumb devil of unusual potency has seized upon my scanty number of correspondents. The Trenches may be practising the 100th psalm in heaven for anything I know to the contrary: and the only token I have of Kemble's "carping vital air" is the arrival of the last British and Foreign Review without so much as "God speed you" in the cover. Mr. Buller and two Mrs. B.'s—one only, I take it his wife—have just left Mattishall. Mrs. Buller in whom you led me to expect an atheist disappointed me in that particular, but in every other I was very much pleased with her. Reginald[2] is a good little fellow but was not born with a gold spoon in his mouth. He paid the Bishop the compliment of attending the visitation—but in bands only, not having a gown among his chattles at present—which omission drew upon the modest little man a full share of episcopal invective in full conclave. It was very harsh, every one says, in his lordship; and as Reginald says, very unfair, inasmuch as the Bishop had no wig on—consequently deserved a wigging himself.

Yr. affect. friend
W. B. Donne

[1] The Sterling Club, founded in 1838, met at "Wills in Lincoln's Inn Fields at 7 o'clock on the last Tuesday of every month," and most of the Apostles belonged to it.

[2] Reginald Buller was Curate of Mattishall. He was the younger brother of Charles Buller, M.P., who was one of the original "Apostles" and a pupil of Carlyle. Charles Buller went out to Canada with Lord Durham, and is mentioned in the next letter.

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

MATTISHALL
[SEPT. 4, 1838]

MY DEAR FRIEND,

. . . . . .

Southey has been in Norfolk, on a visit to the Rev[d]. Neville, Kirke White's brother, and for some days I had hopes that some lurking uncertainties about "Cowper" would have brought him hither to have them cleared up. But I am afraid he has returned by the way he came, although I trust that no lion has devoured him for so doing. It has so happened that of all men Southey is just now the very one I wanted to see. For being on a cruise in the shallows of Coleridge's biographers, and very often aground, I should have begged a few living facts from him to help me off. Indiscreet and unnecessary communicativeness seems to me the peculiar judgement upon all writers of lives at this time, and the most flagrant instances are to be found in the most popular books, *e.g.*, Lockhart's Scott. But commend me to Mr. Joseph Cottle of Bristol for friendly and affectionate slander of a beloved friend. Mrs. Candour's motives for endorsing a lie were not purer, neither her mode of disseminating one, better aimed. I would propose to Mr. Lockhart, or to Mr. Cottle the following experiment. Take two ordinary men—country gentlemen like myself—fiat experimentum in corpore vili—note down day by day our inconsistencies, our short-comings, our habits of drinking gin and water, and smoking canaistre, and taking snuff, put down when we abuse the cook, or the groom, how often we fall out with our neighbours, and you will find, that we who have no genius at all, commit nearly as many exorbitances as the most favoured "children of the sun". Argal, all you commemorate so minutely on these points are nothing to the point; they are common to all men *if* watched; but the genius, the range and discussion of thought and feeling, *that* we have not, and *that* you tack as something inherent to genius, even as Mezentius the dead body to the living, and then you cry, "What odd fellows these great men are!" Rogers uttered one of his caustic sayings upon Lockhart's Scott—"I always thought Lockhart did not like

Scott, but now I am sure he hated him". You forbade me to think of seeing you this summer—but as you may possibly have some attraction of business or of pleasure to Norwich, it will be as well to mention that about the middle of this month we shall probably be there for some weeks, and if you come, inquire at the Norfolk Hotel, in St. Giles, and you will be directed to my sojourn. I will not promise you a bed, for I might not be able to keep it, but everything else in reason, and a hearty welcome you shall have.

Mrs. Bodham has been away from us for some time—but returns next week. She entered her 91st year in June, and is still bravely. Have you seen Lane's Arabian Nights with illustrations by Wm. Harvey the same that embellished "Southey's Cowper"? Under this new form they read as fresh to me, as when first I turned over the leaves of thè "old version". Lane has brought dresses, and, I believe forms "tableaux vivans" for Harvey to copy—and very faithfully, and very beautifully he has conceived oriental manners. Some people, more nice than wise, complain that the new style, *i.e.*, Lane's translation, reads like the Scriptures, which is not at all unlikely as it is the eastern mode of expression.

I will not venture to promise you a better letter the next time I write, but if it be a worse I will promise not to send it—and with best remembrances from Mrs. Donne, believe me

Yrs. very truly
W. B. Donne

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

Norwich
Oct. 29, 1838

My dear friend,

. . . . . .

I am meditating a trip, so soon as Madame is well again, to London, and then through the blessing of railroads first into Staffordshire and then into Hampshire. What would have taken some years since, *days*, will now be performed in as many *hours*. The great difficulty will be to get to London, as it is a mere mortal conveyance by sixteen legs and four-wheels, whereas

from London, I shall travel, like an evil spirit, by the ministry of air and fire.

We are to have to-day in this ancient city a grand radical demonstration. Mr. Stephens,[1] that militant ecclesiastic, who recommends the people to have their rifles ready, and Fergus O'Connor, and certain other smoking firebrands are to address the lieges. I do not know what effect their eloquence will have on me, but should you hear that the military were called out, and after a desperate resistance Peter Smith, John Thomson, and W. B. Donne were secured and lodged in the Bridewell you will not be so much alarmed as if I had not previously told you of the meeting. I shall look in, about an hour after the commencement of the meeting, since, by that time, the reverend orator will have gotten into his altitudes.

Edward FitzGerald is, I believe, now at Boulge. Will you deliver him the enclosed note, or if he be not there, put it into the Boulge letter-bag, as it will then be forwarded to him *free*.

You may as well tell him that his notions of a letter differ widely from mine. He sent me from Lowestoffe a screed of paper with six lines, and not sealed, and instead of the lines containing letters and words, as you might have concluded, there was something that looked like an exercise in punctuation, *e.g.*, "j : , : ? ! : . = × . ;".

With Mrs. Donne's kind remembrances united to my own

Believe me to remain

Very faithfully yrs.

W. B. Donne

"Mrs. Bodham is quite well."

Bernard Barton to W. B. Donne

Woodbridge

November 3, 1838

My dear friend,

. . . Edward FitzGerald left Boulge Tuesday last for Geldeston, purposing to go thence for Norwich with the express design of beating up thy Norwich Quarters. However,

[1] Joseph Rayner Stephens, agitator, 1805-1879; Methodist missioner at Stockholm, 1826-1829; joined the Chartists, 1838; arrested for attending an unlawful meeting at Hyde, 1838.

on second thoughts, I think I shall send thy note to Boulge too; lest at Geldeston he should form any fresh plans leaving Norwich out of the question. But I know it was his full intention to pay thee a visit. . . .

I read *no* Papers, so I had not heard of Madame's present to Thee. May it (I know not its sex so I class it perforce among neutrals) be a blessing and comfort to you both. By the bye a friend of mine, whose good lady had done him a similar favour, anxious to relieve the solicitude of his father-in-law, who lived in the same city and had stopt with him to a late hour in the evening but left ere all was well over, sent his manservant in the dead of night to communicate the tidings to the old Gent. who was as deaf as a post. After rapping and ringing till all the neighbours were roused, the messenger succeeded in bringing the new Grandpapa to his chamber window.

"Sir, my mistress is in bed and doing very well."

"I am glad to hear it," says Grandpapa; "What has she got?"

Now this was exactly what the messenger had never waited to be told, so the poor fellow was floor'd. Putting however the best face he could on the matter, he roared out with the lungs of Achilles when Greeks and Trojans were battling over the dead body of Panoclus—"*A Child!* Sir!" "So I suppose," muttered grandpapa, shutting his window amid peals of laughter from divers other windows open'd out of curiosity during the dialogue.

. . . . . .

Thine ever affectionately
B. Barton

J. M. Kemble to W. B. Donne

[1838]

My dear Willie,

I do mean to publish another number on the first of October and if I can manage it, to put Shelley into it. But lest you should start at my implied doubt I wish to tell you exactly the footing on which I want you to permit me to put you. I have many contributors, on all sorts of subjects, and of

all conceivable varieties of temperament, the sanguine or choleric largely predominating; these men are all impatient. Now about eight such people have sent articles, which taken together with one or two matters of immediate urgency, would make up a good number; and they are unreasonable enough to argue that their articles having been in my hands various periods from twelve till eighteen months they think their turn is come. To choleric men (clerical and lay) urging such arguments, I feel it very difficult to give an answer satisfactory to myself and totally impossible to give one satisfactory to them. Now what I want is your consent, in consideration of our old friendship, to be made a property of, and put in or left out, not as it may suit you, but as it may suit me: the more so, because I have left the choleric men out in order to admit you, heretofore, and turn and turn about does seem *fair*.

. . . . . .

Yr. affectte. friend
J. M. KEMBLE

J. M. Kemble to W. B. Donne

MY DEAR WILLY,

. . . . . .

I shall have the pleasure of sending you a copy of Francis the First; for five and sixpences are precious in my eyes and should be so in yours too: we are in the midst of the *fifth* Edition which rejoices me much because Murray has behaved with so much liberality both to Fanny and me that I should have been miserable if the speculation had turned out ill. My book he at once offered to publish for me, free from risk to myself and if there are profits we share them. He asked me to dinner the other day, and among the company was Hogg. The "Shepherd" is quite delicious; he made the finest whiskey toddy in the world, and sang several glorious songs, his own, Burns', and some old Jacobite ones which made my heart leap: the things which John Wilson makes him say and do in the *Noctes*, are so wonderfully like, that I more than half made him out by the resemblance: after one of his *Rantin Songs* as he called it, I told him he could not make me forget Kilmeny &c. &c. &c.: he

was pleased and we struck up a vast acquaintance *instanter*. The rest of the party were very clever and pleasant. Jesse who has just published a nice book on Natural History, Fullarton the author of the article in the Quarterly on Misgovernment; Brockedon the artist, Galt, Westmacott the sculptor, Stanfield the painter &c. &c. &c. all very agreeable.

Yr. affect. friend
J. M. KEMBLE

J. M. Kemble to W. B. Donne

NORTH END
DEC. 12, [1838]

MY DEAR WILLY,

I am gravely at work upon vol. iii. of my Saxons in England "Marriage, Divorce, and the Family". Nobody ever suspected what an immense lot there was to be known on these subjects and it is not very clear how persons without "Anglo-Saxon" could very well comprehend the Anglo-Saxons: they assuredly could not make use of the charters, which I have done to an almost ridiculous extent; even many of the Latin charters are only translations and bad ones too, from earlier Saxon; I could shew you some curious instances of the blunders made in translating even while Anglo-Saxon was still a living tongue: and in later periods, there is no folly too great to be imagined, which people have not imagined, in their ignorance of the language. Wilkins gives me an example: he represents it as a Saxon law that "no man shall kill *another man* except in the presence of two or three witnesses; and then he shall keep his skin for four days". Wilkins read hpyðer,[1] hwyther, and thought it meant *other* or *another*, which it does not: I had not yet told all these gentry that hpýðer, hrýther, meant an "ox," some regulation for the slaying of which might well be necessary among a race of cattle-stealers, and which is familiar in its present new high-dutch form *Rind;* old high-dutch *Hrintar* &c. But still one marvels the utter absurdity of the thing had not struck him at once. I think now of publishing by themselves such of the

[1] The Anglo-Saxon letter for r (ꝑ) and w (ꝓ) were much alike, "Wilkins" mistook them.

charters as are in Anglo-Saxon with a translation, and perhaps some few philological remarks, but the great thing is to make their contents accessible to all the world.

. . . . . .

Yr. affectionate friend
J. M. KEMBLE

W. B. Donne to J. W. Blakesley

MATTISHALL
JAN. 24, 39

MY DEAR BLAKESLEY,

I hope the 1st volume of Dr. Arnold's history is already so well known and liked as to give him fresh heart and hope for those that are to come. I find my own admiration of it very much increased by a *third* perusal.

I have heard little and seen nothing of our friends except Edward FitzGerald who staid a day or two with me in the autumn. He is more of a philosopher than ever, and his proficiency appears in wearing a most venerable coat and clouted shoon. He was when he left me, under marching orders for Hastings to convoy certain sisters. He has some of the inconveniences of marriage even in his state of innocence—and among them I should reckon not the least that of accompanying Mrs. FitzGerald (his Mother) the round of the theatres to see the "*Demon Dwarf*," and sometimes the Melodrames.

I do not envy Barnes his pupillizing, as, after having had one pupil at home, I prefer tending swine like the prodigal to repeating the trial. But if any literary work with a fair remuneration—not "*guerdon*" but "remuneration" mind you—is going begging, I am too dirty a dog to mind snapping at it. I would not indeed work for Richard C. but anything in reason, so "remember me" should an opportunity offer. I have long since concluded with myself, and deem it for the good of Posterity it should know, that the man with guineas in his pockets is the great man—a truth evidently hidden from Wordsworth or he would not have asked so idle a question as that "Who is *the happy Warrior?*"

At length I have read Maurice's "Kingdom of Christ" in its

collected form. Much of so much as I understand of it is admirable, some things I scratch my head at, and at some shake it altogether.

His idea of a Church History at the end of the second volume is a first rate piece of critical philosophy. Howbeit with certain reminiscences of Church History present with me I cannot altogether trace the Catholic Unity of Christendom, so smoothly as he would point it out.

. . . . . .

Yr. sincere friend
W. B. DONNE

The following letter is from Mrs. Bodham, then in her ninety-first year. Charles and Mowbray Donne were respectively seven and six years old at the time, and as "Aunt Bodham" often rewarded them with a sixpence after reading to her, they never failed to present themselves after breakfast.

Mrs. Bodham to Mrs. Edward Donne

MATTISHALL
JUNE 5, 1839

MY DEAR NIECE,

I will endeavour with my own hands to thank you most kindly for your present of the nice apron, which fits beautifully and with my Sunday dress looks very handsome. Dear Charles said "Aunt you will go to Church with it I suppose".

I am happy to say Charles, and all our darlings are quite well. Nurse has just taken Charles away, for he keeps in my room after breakfast. He comes and reads the Psalms to me and when he leaves me dear Mowbray comes and reads to me also. Fred and Blanche run in when they can find admittance not being able to open the door themselves. I trust you will excuse this sad performance, my poor hand is very painful.

Accept kind love from

Yr. affect. Aunt
ANNE BODHAM

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

BOULGE HALL
AUG. 22, [1839]

MY DEAR DONNE,

I had a letter from you nearly 3 weeks back I think, while I was staying at Bedford. By what you told me then, I conclude you are now at Cromer; but I direct to Mattishall as you desired me. Thank you for your invitations &c., if I were disengaged, I should come over to the sea-side and wander about on the shore with you, but I have come here to *assist* at a kind of family reunion for a time, and believe that I shall go over to Ireland about the beginning of September. The middle of October (at the latest), will find me with all my summer wanderings over, ready to wish myself in cotton and quietude for the winter.

Perhaps however I shall see you some of those days: for an excursion to Norfolk from here, or to Norwich from Gelderstone, is not to be accounted in the list of long movements.

I have nothing at all to tell you of, less than ever, as I have even read nothing for months except Dante's Paradisi, which happens to have been published some time. By the way I stumbled upon a Review by Carlyle on some German Memoirs of a certain Rahel Von Ense, in the Westminster which touched me as all his writings do. I suppose one day I shall be converted to be a furious admirer of his French Revolution. All this time I think Carlyle is a one-sided man; but I like him because he pulls one the opposite side to which all the world are pulling one.

Tell Mrs. Donne I read his and a translation of her favourite Quintus Fixlein some weeks ago; the design and the characters are very fine; but rather muddled with sentiment—so I think now: but I hope to be converted by her one of these days.

In the Review I spoke of before, there is an account of Jean Paul in his little home at Baireuth—a very beautiful account of a very noble simple fellow. The Author stays a day with him, "But (as Carlyle says) those candles are blown out, and the fruit

platters swept away, and all the living story of that household gone down into the long night".

Have you ever read Carlyle's review of Lockhart's Scott?—There is little else but Carlyle in this letter I see.

Pray Donne write to me if you can: and tell me that Mrs. Donne is better. I have resumed my *farming character*, now that Harvest is pending, pending indeed it has been during these rains, but now the weather seems promising fine. Farewell: kind remembrances to all.

Ever yrs.
E. FitzGerald

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

Mattishall
Sept. 29, 1839

My dear friend,

. . . . . .

A Mr. Pymont of some street Westminster wrote to me the other day that he had a picture of a lady and child who in the year 1660 bore the name of Donne, and offering the same to me for a consideration. The man seems marvellously perfect in our genealogy, and I can therefore believe the picture to be a genuine portrait, but abstractedly I have no reverence for what frequently constitutes family pictures, and though I might be tempted by a well-favoured progenitress, I will not have a stiff, awful, bilious, unpropitious looking dame with a dropsical boy in her arms. Nay, I have practised what I profess, and burned or buried some years ago, sundry of my forefathers and foremothers for their ugliness. I would much rather as a matter of taste have a gallery of my posterity than of my predecessors. There is some chance the former will never wear wigs or hair-powder, or buttons as big as muffins, or posys in their breasts, or flaps to their pockets or red heels to their shoes, and therefore an equal chance that they will look as they were created—with a slight addition of drapery.

Yr. affect. friend
W. B. Donne

J. W. Blakesley to W. B. Donne

TRIN. COLL., CAM.
NOV. 17, 1839

MY DEAR DONNE,

. . . . . .

You have taken so kindly to the avocation of writing that I am induced to hope you will undertake another job of that kind. Malden has brought down the history of Rome to the taking of the city by the Gauls, and our friends Thompson and Merivale had engaged to continue it, the first from the Gallic invasion to the end of the Commonwealth, the latter from that time to Heaven knows when. Thompson, pro more suo, declares that he finds he is utterly unequal to the task and what is worse has determined to resign the affair. He would be extremely obliged to you if you would undertake it,—but whether you do or not, he is determined himself to give up. Now it would be very disagreeable to Malden and Merivale to have for their coadjutor some person "knowing little Latin and less Greek" as is likely to be the case if they cannot find a person to put forward themselves; and you will confer a great favour upon them, the Apostles, and the world in general, if you will allow Thompson to propose you as his substitute. I think you have bestowed a good deal of pains on this subject, and made collections for some years past, so that the labour although a very great one would be far lighter to you than to Thompson, who has lectures to give to the undergraduates on subjects quite disconnected with his opus magnum. I think this will be far more satisfactory than writing lives for Rose's Dictionary, which is likely I think to be but a poor thing after all, and the pay will certainly not be worse. They propose to give £30 per sixpenny number and they expect three such numbers in the course of the year.

Yrs. affect.
J. W. BLAKESLEY

W. B. Donne to J. W. Blakesley

MATTISHALL, E. DEREHAM
13 DECEMBER, 1839

MY DEAR BLAKESLEY,

. . . . . .

I heard from the Secretary of the U. K. S. (Useful Knowledge Society) last week, that he intended laying Thompson's letter and Mr. Malden's recommendation, this week before the committee; so, at present, I am only "in danger of the council". By the time of our meeting I shall probably have heard farther. Had I known of Thompson's intentions not to bring out a *No* before Midsummer 1840, I probably should have fixed a more distant day for my own parturition. But I believe it is better as it is; since, having too much time before one is nearly as bad as having too little—especially with those who like myself love reading better than inditing.

Setting aside the £90 per annum, I shall like the job as well as any that could have been cut out for me—and at the very respectable pace Rose is driving at, I see no reason why I may not horse an occasional stage for him, into the bargain.

Pray undeceive yourself as to our having put a Whig bishop into the chair to keep the peace at a Church of England National Education Meeting. It was a Tory Lord Lieutenant who troubled the waters. He reversed Sir Lucius O'Trigger's concluding observation, and left no contented person present who was not dissatisfied.

I have a very long letter from Vipan and some excellent MS. of his to show you, which I hope he will publish. He would I believe come to England, did it please God to take to himself about half of the friends and kinsfolk he (Vipan) has in this country.

With Mrs. Donne's best remembrances.

Yours ever most truly
WILLIAM B. DONNE

In 1839 Donne was able to spend a few days with Trench at Botley, and be present at the "Sterling" dinner, on his way through London; and for the next few years this yearly dinner was all the recreation he allowed himself. His life was indeed very

fully occupied (owing to his wife's chronic ill-health) with home-duties, superintending the household, and teaching his children.

Donne managed nevertheless to write some "Lives" of the Cæsars for the "Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge" (U. K. S.), but after publishing four numbers he writes:—

I have learnt that there is no subject for which people care so little as Roman History. This knowledge though it abates nothing of my admiration of the subject, very considerably lessens my zeal for instructing the public, who refuse to hear the voice of the charmer.

W. B. Donne to J. W. Blakesley

MATTISHALL
JAN. 3, 1840

MY DEAR BLAKESLEY,

The parcel of books arrived safely yesterday, and Martin nosed them, and drank 13 cups of bohea in honour of their advent. The packet was not sent to Cambridge for the same reason the English fleet was not seen—it was not ready. The necessity of entertaining a bevy of relations in Christmas week, to say nothing of an affecting parting with the only physician in the family—marred my leisure.

. . . . . .

Rose's carelessness is beyond bearing. I send him an article on "Alferius Varus" which would have occupied not quite half a column, and I believe contained all that is known about him. He was a shoemaker, who quitted the awl for the bar, and studied law under the celebrated Servius Sulpicius. Rose cramps me up into three lines, in which he manages to say, that "*Alferius was apprenticed as a shoemaker to Servius Sulpicius*". Suggest a gentlemanly mode of striking, that I may get quit of responsibility for such blunders.

FitzGerald will probably come home with me to-morrow—we just missed him by my note not being delivered early enough. He is reading Livy, and sends me a most ingenious criticism on Niebuhr, with a wood-cut, as a great humbug! It will make a fine frontispiece for the U. K. S. Roman History, when complete.

Your affectionate friend

W. B. DONNE

W. B. Donne to J. W. Blakesley

THURSDAY MORNING
1840

MY DEAR BLAKESLEY,

I find it of singular use, when I am in debt to any one a letter, to accuse my creditor of owing *me* one. This I have lately practised upon Trench, who growls at the fraud like a bear awakened from sleep. It has elicited, however, from him a much fuller and more satisfactory bulletin of himself and his acts, and his wars, and all that he does than I have had for some time.

Merivale sent me a most admirable outline of his plan for our joint undertaking: and my expectations are highly raised for its fulfilment. I begin to see my way through the scope and contents of my No. I. But, at first, I was absolutely in despair: and I shall not feel at all comfortable until I am beyond the first Punic War. Mr. Rose has given up, or been given up by, the Biography: and we are no longer driven 6 miles an hour.

I have been so fortunate as to meet Dr. Arnold[1] lately. He greatly pleased me, although as to his outward man, I had dreamed him something of the Busby and Drury kind. I am glad, however, that my boyish days are over, as I can believe his shrewd and piercing eye would assume a very sinister expression in case of a false quantity, or a bad construe. But, bless my heart, to hear him recount the difficulties of the History of Rome, is enough to drive one mad, especially as I believe him quite correct in his notions—on the latter periods of the republic we did not agree at all: and there I did not mind crossing weapons with him.

Pray excuse this scrawl and believe me

Yrs. ever most truly
W. B. DONNE

[1] Dr. Arnold, 1795-1842, Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford; Headmaster of Rugby, 1828-1842; author of *History of Rome* (unfinished), 1838-1842, etc.

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

MATTISHALL
FEBRUARY 24TH, 1840

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Towers of Siloam luckily seldom fall, otherwise I do not deny but that I deserve at least a few bricks on my head for my sins as a correspondent. We have neither wished each other a happy new year, nor exchanged valentines nor kept twelfth-night, and all these omissions are fairly to be laid at my door, for not answering your last letter written many months ago. Know however, for your comfort, that the punishment of my sins has fallen upon me not in the shape of bricks and tiles nor, like Gibbon's, in that of a fit of the gout, but in Influenza or something of the sort, which, after tormenting me for a fortnight, has left me decrepid in body, and foolish in mind. Snuff is an abomination to me: I cannot smoke: and I am indifferent to Roman history. The only place I am really fit for is "Fool's Paradise" and I am worthy to enter therein.

How have you been this winter: we were rejoicing like crickets and swallows in the mildness of January, when February damped all our chirpings. FitzGerald betook himself in time to a London chimney corner, after some idle speculations about settling in a country-town for the winter. I recommended him to try Dereham, because Dereham contains no one of the elements of his comfort and, had he been in earnest, would have most speedily put his project to flight. Dereham is peopled with Capulets and Montagues who quarrel on every decent occasion—such as coals, schools, gravel-pits, Friendly Societies, odd Fellows, newspapers, churchwardens, &c., and would have managed to draw our even-minded friend into some squabble, or would have united, to squabble with him. Formerly small towns had fixed principles—the clergyman was the principal person: the lawyer had the largest house: the doctor the largest knocker and the brightest shutters, and each of these was the oracle of certain circles of elderly ladies who agreed pretty well; or at least who loved cards and scandal too well to quarrel seriously. Now there is nothing but "Church" and "Dissent" the old ladies

have disappeared: the single lawyer and doctor are frittered away into half a dozen eager bipeds in each class, and the parson is converted into a jealous sentinel of the church, suspecting and questioning every body, and turning yellow if you utter a word of doubt or dissent.

My fire is nearly out, and I have really accomplished much more than I expected when I began.

Very truly yours
W. B. DONNE

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

MATTISHALL, E. DEREHAM
MARCH 27TH, 1840

MY DEAR FRIEND,

A letter from Edward FitzGerald complaining of me as a correspondent reminds me also that if I have used him ill, I have treated you worse.

. . . . . .

Can you give me any recent intelligence of poor Southey? I am informed that his case is almost hopeless: although it is alleviated by his exemption from pain. He has always shown symptoms of a "perfervidum ingenium": but his habits were so regular, and brought him so seldom in contact with the annoyances of the world that such a termination of his laborious life was beyond prediction. The "Globe" with the usual delicacy of a newspaper, censured him for not writing an Epithalamion to Prince Albert. Walter Landor undertook to defend him, and to supply the deficiency by writing one himself. But he has singularly unhappy notions of the province of a court-poet: since in what he meant to be complimentary to the Queen, he calls her progenitors fools, and herself, if I understand his Ode, the litter of Westphalian swine! She may very well reply to him "Thou hast the most unsavoury similies".

You will be glad to learn that Trench's poems succeed so well that he intends republishing his two volumes in one, in a cheaper form, and with additions. If you see the Educational Magazine the *New* Series, you will find him a contributor, except however in the last number—No. 3—which contains

"Orpheus and the Argonauts". I am not greatly in love with his later effusions. They are too moral: too much of the "do-me-good" sort: and with too little colour and precision to be poetry.

You must certainly intend a pilgrimage into Norfolk this summer. Until July I am nearly certain of being at home: having besides my wife and children, two or three good-sized clogs hung upon me, and fastened to my desk. If however you come in July or August the odds are you would still find me here, but more at liberty to rove and expatiate than in the weeks which intervene between now and then. At any time, however, I shall be glad to welcome you. There are two or three choice pictures to be seen within a mile or two: and I have parted with that kicking horse I had when you were here before: my present brute only stands upright. You are not, however, required to ride him.

I am told that the late severe weather has had a most singular effect upon the lawyers on circuit. At Cambridge's assizes, last week, the attorney general and Mr. Kelly who were opposed to each other in a road-case were seen gesticulating in dumb show: their voices being quite extinct. Nothing could exceed the fury of their argumentative looks: and all their energies were concentrated in pantomime. How the jury managed to understand them I am not competent to say—perhaps they impannelled none but conjurors, and clowns, and deaf and dumb persons, such as can hold discourse by leaping and tumbling, and by means of their fingers.

Mrs. Bodham is I think rather aged this winter. She would, did she know I was writing to you desire her best remembrances might accompany Mrs. Donne's. Should you see FitzGerald pray assure him I admit the justice of his complaints and will write to him shortly. Were it not for the penny-post, I should not venture to send you so wretched a note. The paper I write on is fit only for a history of Grease but I discovered its lubricity too late.

Believe me ever
Yrs. very truly
W. B. Donne

Bernard Barton to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
APRIL 5, 1840

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I thank thee heartily for thy letter and would come to thy pleasant habitat and glad, but see no chance of doing so at present. . . . Edward FitzGerald has been at Boulge I think a fortnight, and has spent two or three evenings, I really believe *four*, with us, to my great pleasure. He brought me down a valuable present too, a Snuff-box of noble dimensions, made from a bit of the Royal George. I like it not the less from its putting me in mind of Cowper and his noble dirge "Toll for the Brave". A Snuff-box is the best form of any I know in which to put "material" of this kind, and is in itself one of the pleasantest momentoes I know of an absent friend. Such may not be the case with those who only pretend to take Snuff—who can be without their box and not miss it, but with one really of the Corps it is a never failing Memoria Technica. I do not think I was in any danger of forgetting our very pleasant friend, but now it is impossible.

I am going to be made a great Man! Not exactly called to the Peerage, but I am not sure the announcement of such an elevation being in prospect could have been more unlooked for. Four of my Townsfolk or Neighbours, for two of 'em live out of Woodbridge, are building a new Ship, and she is to be launched from the Stocks here this month or next under the name of "The Bernard Barton of Woodbridge".—"Think of that Master Ford!" If my Bardship never gets me on the Muster-roll of Parnassus, it will into the Shipping-List! If I fail of being chronicled among the Poets of Great Britain by some future Cibber, I shall at any rate be registered at Lloyds, along with the Spitfires, Amazons, Corsairs and what not. The astounding fact was made known to me by one of the four owners a fortnight ago, and I have scarce recovered it yet. I communicated it, too abruptly, to poor Edward FitzGerald, just as he was going to sit down to dinner with me, and he jumped up, chair and all, taking that and himself into the far corner of the

room, professing he could not presume to sit at the same table with one about to have a ship named after him. I wish I may bear such unlooked for honor with becoming meekness, if I do, I must thank my Quakerism for it, for it would ill befit one of our cloth to be uplifted in spirit by such an event. But I believe, Quaker as I am, I shall be fain to indulge a little in idle vanity, for I had a letter a day or two ago from a certain Mr. Bennett, who he is I know no more than that mysterious personage the Man in the Moon, but he tells me he is making a collection of the Autographs "*of the most illustrious Men of the present time*," and hopes I will kindly permit him to add mine to said collection. Now "This is rayther too rich" as Sam Weller said "the young Lady told the Pastry Cook when he gave her a Pork Pie as was all fat". One might almost fancy Mr. Bennett had heard I was about to have a Ship named after me. The fun of the thing is, with all my illustriousness, it seems my whereabout is unknown, as the writer directs to me at *Ipswich*. And to crown the joke, the applicant has put neither date nor habitat to his letter. The postmark looks like Bristol, so if I send that invaluable relic, my autograph, I must hazard it conjecturally, on that wide solution. Well, so be it, only pray set me down in future among the most illustrious,—authority, Mr. Bennett. I mourn over Edward FitzGerald's departure, for his occasional droppings-in of an evening were like green spots in the desert —as poor Lamb once said—"The sky does not drop such larks every day". Pray make my very kindest respects to Mrs. Donne and my most reverential ones to Mrs. Bodham. I believe I am more proud of having sate on the same "*sofa*" with her, than of having, or being about to have, a ship named after me. The Bernard Barton may go to the bottom (tho' I hope better things for her)—how odd it seems to write of myself in the feminine gender—and her fate may only bring disgrace on my name, as having tended to bring about such a catastrophe, but nothing in the unroll'd scroll of the future, so long as that future is passed by me in this state of being, can cheat me out of the remembrance of that bright hour or two at Mattishall and in its environs. There are few in my life that I have lived over again with more delight.

. . . I only wish I had thee in the opposite chair, to take a pinch out of the Royal George, or another as interesting a relic, standing by me on the table, a plain wooden box, the original cost of which might be 2/6 or 3/- but to me it has a worth passing show, having been the working box and table companion of Crabbe the poet. It was given me by his son and biographer, and I prize it far beyond a handsome silver one, Crabbe's dress box, which I think his son told me he gave to Murray. But I must close this long and I fear tedious scribble. Take thy revenge, and inflict a sheet as long on

Thy affectionate friend

B. Barton

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

June 1, 1840

My dear Friend

That I have used you exceedingly ill is so much the fact, that I have begun to feel quite callous and reckless about it—and that I may not grow quite hardened, since this mood has come upon me, I take up my pen at ¾ past the eleventh hour, or perhaps some minutes nearer the twelfth. FitzGerald has been staying at Mattishall, and we plotted together to indite unto you a joint epistle, but I find he has since performed his part separately, and taken an unfair advantage of our mutual procrastination. I once wrote a joint epistle in the Spenserian Stanza to a friend at Newcastle: and I must say for the production that it might have been bound up with the latter cantos of Don Juan, without any great difference being apparent. But the epistle you were threatened with would have been in prose—for three reasons. 1st because we are not bold enough to write in metre to a poet. 2nd because I am grown older, and rhime [*sic*] flows uneasily from me—and lastly E. F. G. is too lazy to perpetrate so elaborate an absurdity. Should we either of us *dream* a letter in verse you shall have the benefit of it.

I have been not long since to see Mr Trench. . . . His second volume has not sold so well as the former one. But Moxon says "books of a much more popular cast sell badly now," and authorship of all kinds is at discount. This is the worse news

ABRAHAM CASTRES

inasmuch as the indifferent sale of one book retards the publication of others, and Trench is keeping back sundry translations from the Spanish because he cannot vend his own originals.

We have some new neighbours at Yaxham Parsonage and very good ones, as they come in and go out quietly and without such impertinent cerem ' s as asking one "how he does" or informing him of the weather. These are the Johnsons—sons of the late incumbent commonly called and known as Cowper's "Johnny". The youngest is alive to all manner of knowledge, and if he will but learn to dance, or anything that conduces to give him exercise, he will become a man in time of mark and likelihood.[1] The eldest is a most valuable parish minister, and an excellent fellow, only somewhat unlucky in horse-flesh at his outset in life. He has ridden a troop already, and is now mounted on the baggage-waggon.[2]

We have suspended a portrait in our dining-room that excites FitzGerald's indignation. It is a respectable middle-aged man, not quite, but nearly large enough for a Town Hall. The original was remarkable, if the copy be true, for having been at the great earthquake at Lisbon, for a perpetual smile, for a hilly wig, between which you may walk over his forehead into the nape of his neck, and thence down his pigtail into his pockets, but more than all for having the forefinger of each hand curved benevolently. Whether the said curvature was caused by the earthquake, or whether, as it points downward, he prophesyed it, are points which our family-history throws no light upon. FitzGerald proposes his being altered into Moses, and given to some church in want of a legislator, especially, if at a London picture-broker's, we could pick up an old Aaron. I am of opinion that by successive additions, judiciously made, he might represent, one after another, all the heroes in Plutarch.

Mrs. Bodham is a good deal altered since you saw her, but still is bravely for 92. Her principal disasters arise from always

[1] Henry R. Vaughan Johnson, born 1820. Educated Sherborne and Trinity College, Cambridge. Barrister—one of the six conveyancing Council to the High Court. Died 1900.

[2] Rev. William Cowper Johnson, born 1813. Educated Sherborne and Corpus Christi College, Cambridge; thirty-third Wrangler. Hon. Canon of Norwich. Died 1893.

having lost something. I do not believe she has done five minutes work of any kind for the last month from mere looking for her implements, and when all are at last recovered, her spectacles are conjured away, and her losses, so soon as they are found again, recommence.

Have you seen any of De Quincey's[1] recent papers in Tait's Magazine? He is seemingly grown the most melancholy spectacle in the universe—a great intellect in ruins. He has raked together all the idle tales and rumours that ever were afloat in the most idle neighbourhood of Keswick and recorded them in print. It is his pleasure to call them reminiscencies, and he has remembered whatever will annoy the objects of his recollections. Wordsworth comes off especially ill—it is more than hinted that he looks like a tailor—which supposing his head could be taken from his shoulders, and his profile begin with his collar and cravat he perhaps does—the head and front of all this is, I suppose, that De Quincey has been standing still since his "Opium Eater," while his early associates have steadily attained a higher and more permanent reputation with every year.

I have been persuaded with some ado to read "Nicholas Nickleby". A glance at an early number some time since in which the atrocities at Mr. Squeers' Academy are detailed gave me a dislike to it, and "Pickwick" was quite enough for one age to have produced. I can read it always waking or asleep; as long as Touchstone could make rhimes. But Nicholas is I admit of a "higher mood" both in description and in character-drawing: though not so *delicious* as Pickwick. Mrs. Nickleby is the most ideally foolish woman in history.

Do not mete to me the same measure[2] you have received from me, but let me hear from you promptly.

Mrs. Donne and Mrs. Bodham unite with me in best regards.

Yours very truly

W. Bodham Donne

[1] Thomas de Quincey, 1785-1859. Author of *Confessions of an Opium Eater* (1821); contributed "Reminiscences of the Lake Poets" to *Tait's Magazine*, 1834.

[2] I mean in delaying to write don't interpret it of quantity.

SATURDAY
JUNE 1

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

MY DEAR FRIEND,

. . . . . .

Can you not put a little ratsbane in E. F. G.'s toasted cheese—not enough to make it fatal, but merely purgative. He has used me vilely. First he takes me to task for using long words, such as he says he does not understand; and then when I protest against being accused of affectation he defends himself by saying that I am not so much affected as stupid. "Shall this fellow live?" All authors are in danger from him, and should unite against him. And you have such an opportunity as does not fall to every one's lot of quieting him.

. . . . . .

I hope your next letter will give a better account of Miss Barton. She fared worse than an elderly gentleman in our neighbourhood, who was caught in an *humane* mantrap, sat clasped by the leg through two tempests; was at last cheered by the sight of a gamekeeper: which gamekeeper proved to have no key with him for the trap, but had one at home nearly three miles off: and while he went for it a pair of vipers, and a dog whose sanity was doubtful, came close up to the elderly gentleman: and all this came of going into a wood!

Believe me, my dear friend, very truly yours
WILLIAM B. DONNE

W. B. Donne to R. C. Trench

JULY 14, 1840

MY DEAR TRENCH,

I am within a week or two of sending my MSS. of my first and 2nd numbers to Mr. Coates. . . .

Certainly seeing one's first proof is not being in Paradise, and hardly perhaps in Purgatory, so differently do MSS. sentences run in MS. and in type: and the printers are always capricious, sometimes it is all black Monday with them, and sometimes they do not keep the Sabbath.

Vipan has been a short time in England: but he has met with a new system of medical treatment in Germany, which would make according to his account a sound man of Job himself! This is the Wasser-cur. The patients drink of the spring, sit under the spring, thrust hissing hot into the spring, and walk about in the spring, until their skin peels off, and any spare bones or excrescences they may have moult, and they go forth into the world rejoicing in their youth. The part of the theory however which I approve is, that you are encouraged to eat much beef and mutton, and allowed to smoke. He (Vipan) has written what when published will be a most beautiful History of Greece, and it will prove him, what I have always maintained him to be, one of the first living scholars.

Yr. affect. friend
W. B. Donne

The following 13th December W. B. Donne writes again to Trench.

I do not know how it is with you, I find that teaching the rudiments of Latin, and arithmetic and such like branches of learning, make my morning's leisure not worth an hour's purchase. Yet what is to be done? The boys must not be heathens, and I am too poor to pay for schooling, and in addition to this must be taken into account the irritation to the nerves, and the interruption to continuous thought which teaching the young idea produces.

I

Ye Bachelors of England
Who live and lie alone
How little do you know of
The things that make us groan
How little do you dream of
The worst of human ills
As you close at dinner's close
The sight of Christmas Bills.

II

There's Blakesley growing stout as
His padded elbow chair
And Spedding feels no doubt as
He lights his fresh cigar,

While we from whom the nation
Receives its fresh supplies
Are full of meditation
When Beef and Sugars rise

III

Then Bachelors of England
Who live so much at ease
Our many tribulations
Remember if you please
And if *we* live the longer
In spite of all our ills
Especially remember
The *married* in your wills.

CAMPBELL!

Kemble has been in great anxiety about his wife. She was indeed hardly out of danger when I heard from him. He was at the same time in constant attendance on his Father, whose state is quite hopeless. It seems impossible for an Actor to retire without dying. His brother did not live long after his professional exit.[1]

Yr. affectionate friend
WILLIAM B. DONNE

The next letter refers to a curious old seal, an impression of which Bernard Barton had sent to Mr. Donne. It was surrounded by the motto "Jesus est amor meus". "The stone or gem set in the centre," says B. B., "is evidently of very old workmanship, and seems to indicate as far as I can 'hazard a wide solution' a figure, offering to a little cur-ish imp, the oblation of a human head."

Bernard Barton to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
JUNE 16, 1841

MY DEAR FRIEND,

. . . . . .

My seal, which I quite agreed with thee in thinking to be curious rather than handsome, puzzles the knowing ones. I went up to London this day fortnight to meet Lu [Lucy] on her way out of Hampshire, and was lionized for two days, one

[1] Charles Kemble did not die till 1854.

day before she came up, and one after her arrival, by my kind friend and neighbour, [1] Major Moor. I always thought him great at home, but he shines out in all his splendour when showing a country friend the sights of London. He took me to the National Gallery and the Exhibition, to see Haydon's great picture of the Anti Slavery Convention of Delegates, and I know not what else: and to crown the whole he took Lu and myself home to his son-in-law's, William Woods, in Dean's Yard, Westminster, where we dined with a live Parsee, a genuine Fire Worshipper. Only fancy my daughter, an Evangelical Churchwoman, and I a Quaker, sitting down to meat with an Idolater. And a very acute, intelligent and pleasant sort of person he was too. His name, if I have the luck to spell it aright, is "Mannochjee Curzettejee". I dare not for the life of me attempt to address him by it, lest I should be guilty of pronounciatory defamation, so I begged to have the pleasure of taking wine with my Parsee friend opposite. Poor fellow! he has the misfortune to be a Lion of the first class, for the Season, and when he left us at ten, had to go to two more great Parties, the last, I think, Lord Palmerston's. The Major having done so much for my daughter and me, I was fain to do what little I could for him, and finding he had not been over Sir Francis Chantry's rooms, I availed myself of my old acquaintance with Allan Cunningham to take him there with us one morning. Allan gave us a hearty welcome, and shew [*sic*] us over the suite of rooms, pointing all, most worth looking at, except himself, as well worth knowing as aught there. I left my old seal with the Major, himself a member of the Society of Antiquaries, to show to one or two of the knowing ones, but he has brought home no very definite solution. Sir F. Palgrave says its execution is that of a barbarous age, which I had guess'd before.

With the National Gallery, or rather, with many pictures in it, I was much gratified. Many of them were of course familiar to me from Engravings, but never before having seen Gallery or Exhibition, I was much struck with the utter inadequacy of *engraving* to give one a true idea of the Painting copied. Form, however faithfully transcribed, can give one no conception of the

[1] Major Moor of Great Bealings. Author of *The Hindu Pantheon*, *Suffolk Words*, *Original Fragments*, etc.

effect produced by colour. I had always admired the prints from Rubens's large Landscape "A Flemish Chateau," with a fine expanse of level country stretching away into almost interminable distance; but when I stood before the Picture itself, I felt that all my prior conceptions of it had been cold and lifeless. One very satisfactory discovery I have made, which is, that looking at these first-rate Specimens of Art, in the manner at least which I only could, two or three hours each day, does not at all lead me to look with diminished pleasure at my own few and humbler productions at home. On the contrary, I am not sure that I have not sate and looked at my own poor little collection with more of quiet enjoyment since my return than ever I did before. I keep fancying I can detect (as one always may in any painting, original or copied, which has genuine merit and truth in it, however humble) casual touches, gleams and tints, which recal to my recollection what excited my delight and wonder, on a larger scale, in Town. And then too, I can sit and look at my own, un-elbow'd by a crowd, and undisturbed by the chatter, be it of critics or vulgar gossips around; and it's wonderful the difference this makes in the power of a painting to cast its whole spell over you.

But my paper admonishes me that I must curtail my London recollections, or reserve what more I may have to say to a future time. Have you got Edward FitzGerald hid up in one of your remoter apartments at M——? I know he is missing here, and his Sisters, who called here to-day, insisted on it he was gone from the Kerriches to you. He can tell thee all about Aldeburgh. I believe he has a penchant for it almost amounting to "la tendre". So I have myself, but I am passionately fond of the seaside anywhere, and it is the place I can get at easiest and go to oftenest, so I have spent many happy hours there. I should like you to come there of all things, as I could perhaps, once or twice, if you stopp'd a month, get down on a Saturday night, and spend a quiet Sunday there during your stay. Talk Edward into going there with you. With kindest regards to all of the House of Donne—Mrs. Bodham specially included.

Thine truly

B. B.

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

JULY 3RD, 1841

MY DEAR FRIEND,

You must serve me as Nebuchadnezzar threatened to serve the magians who could not expound his vision, and, when you have an opportunity, put me to death, for I am as little able to expound your seal: neither have I yet lighted upon a Daniel so you must keep your golden chain and your scarlet robe, and the third place among the aldermen of Woodbridge in reserve until he appear. I "cannot even hazard a wide solution". The giant, if giant he be, seems to have committed a highway robbery on the devil and then to be served with a sort of phrenological brown study. Certes, if this be the interpretation thereof, the legend and the impress are much at variance.

Do you think it a great matter to sit down at meat with an idolater? Some years ago we had a real idolater living a month in this house. Thomas Manning (Lamb's Manning) imported him from China, and neither converted him during his stay, nor required him to cut off his tail which was a yard long, and twisted tight, nor his nails which were three inches long at least, nor to leave off his paper shoes which were a foot high, nor, in short, to do any Christian or gentlemanly thing whatsoever. He taught me to conjure, and had I not been diligently watched by my Mother, who was in some dread of his nails, his lessons might have gone further, and I might have been a proficient in the doctrines of Fôh instead of Paley and Blair. Howbeit he left behind him a Chinese Catechism. It has not however infected my orthodoxy, since I confess myself unable to read it, or rather to explain it. For the catechism is not verbal, and on the interrogatory system; but symbolic, and like Mr. Charles Knight's publications, pictorial, consisting of heads and busts of the five first emperors. If the Chinese worship them, they certainly do not break the second commandment for the ugliness of the five celestials is unlike any ugliness on the land, in the water, or the air. It is worth your while coming to Mattishall to see them. Nothing ever resembled them, except a late prebendary of Norwich who *was* like the third head of the Catechism. Your Parsee was, I take it, a much more sublime

affair; and in some sort I am of his opinion, being a worshipper of the fire and the sun at the proper seasons of the year.

. . . . . .

I witnessed the other day a fine specimen of Saturnalia at Norwich. The Freemen and Chartists having been defrauded of their bribe and drink-money, by the compromise of the election, very justly expressed their virtuous indignation by burlesquing the return of Knights of the Shire in general. They chaired with great ceremony a notorious beggar, and an idiot, the latter in full regimentals representing the most noble Marquis Douro. . . . About 500 of the great unwashed paraded the city for three or four hours, and it was altogether the most lively satire on the proper fate of that most ancient and rotten capital of Norfolk.

If E. F. G. is within your reach, pray tell him I was punctual at twelve o'clock where he wots of. That I afterwards went to various public houses, and finally before the mayor and into the prisons in search of him, but I returned disconsolate, and the very skies sympathised with me, and wetted me through. To make matters worse I had in some measure been the cause of my own disappointment, by putting him off coming the week before.

Believe me ever
Your affectionate friend
WILLIAM B. DONNE

JULY 3RD
MATTISHALL, EAST DEREHAM

W. B. Donne to J. W. Blakesley

MATTISHALL, E. DEREHAM
NOVEMBER 2, 1841

MY DEAR BLAKESLEY,

A long Doctor by name Warcup walked up to me not many days since and gave me your remembrances. From which I inferred that you were at Cambridge, and that it would become me to welcome your arrival.

After such an attack [scarlet fever] as we have had, we are admonished that Mattishall is no place to winter in, and we have great sympathies with Anglesey. The climate is praised by Sir J. Clarke, and the Trenches live there: and we might thus com-

bine health and society. The cost of moving is the lion in the path, and the lion's whelp is that I am fitted with books at Norwich by the miraculous circumstance that the constructor of the library foresaw a country-gentleman would arise in the latter days, who would neglect his proper duties and turn to folly in writing history and biography—and provided accordingly.[1]

E. F. G. (FitzGerald) has vanished from this side of the island, and left his character to evil surmises. It is confidently affirmed in Suffolk that he has accepted the office of Chief Constable of Rural Police in one division of that county. I can discover no other grounds for the rumour, than that he was seen in Beccles market-place demeaning himself like an ancient watchman, *i.e.*, dressed in a most venerable macintosh, and lounging and yawning extremely, near the principal Inn.

Remember me to Thompson and Merivale and

Believe me

Yr. sincere friend

W. B. DONNE

W. B. Donne to J. W. Blakesley

MATTISHALL, E. DEREHAM
FEB. 22, 1842

MY DEAR BLAKESLEY,

Although the confession can redound only to my own confusion, I must admit that about a week ago I received a lithograph of Trench, and that I am only now sitting down to thank you for it. We are truly obliged by your gift, both for the subject's sake and the givers. Laurence has a masterly pencil and time will doubtless soften the asperity of his style which gives, at least to the two drawings I have seen, more of melancholy than I hope either Thompson or Trench exhibit in their daily countenances.

I am told that last summer Arnold went to Spain to trace Hannibal's march from Saguntum to the Rhone. This looks well for his earnestness and for his book—but so far as regards myself it would have looked better had he been knocked on the

[1] The library was the Literary Institution in St. Andrew's, Norwich, which in 1846 became amalgamated with the Norfolk and Norwich Library.

RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH

head by the Carlists or Christinos, as I then should have been, as Mr. Farren says of himself "the only salmon in the market" instead of being so long as he survives "overday fish".

Yrs. ever sincerely
W. B. Donne

J. M. Kemble to W. B. Donne

Chapelfields
5/8/42

My sin is ever before me! No doubt I, in common with others, have behaved intolerably ill to you: and that no doubt, or the thunder, is the reason, that I have at this moment a splitting headache. How are you? and how is your wife? and how are your Brats? and how are your Farmers? Send me a Norfolk Paper, if your eloquence is reported. I should have liked nothing better than to have come down and talked to your "Clay-heads" but unluckily I could not. For some special sin or other, of which I am totally unconscious, I have been delivered over into the hands of a Mr. O. Blewitt, and am accordingly to officiate as one of the Stewards at the Literary Fund Anniversary Dinner on Wednesday the 11th which besides costing me much money will give me a great deal too much trouble. I have already escaped it twice, and knew not how to get off the third time, I had lied so enormously on the former occasions.

I had a letter from Vipan last week. He writes to know when I will receive him in Surrey, prudently laying out his campaign before he ventures into such inhospitable and barbarous regions. He makes it a condition precedent, that Natalie shall not marry him against his will, nor in his sleep, which she will find some difficulty in refraining from. She drove him out of England last year, by insisting upon what she calls the holy estate of matrimony. The Hydropathists have now thoroughly washed, and wrung him out, that I hardly anticipate a readier recognition of him than in Munich two or three years ago, when his Hungarian moustache, and a kind of sword and sabredash swagger that he had picked up among the Magyars, rendered him for a while *méconnoisable*. After all I suspect it is quite as much the Pump

in my garden that he comes hither to visit, as myself. He is a sort of Water-Ogre: he thirsts eternally like Dives in the Story Book, and all his Classics have concentrated themselves in *Ἄριστον μεν Ὕδωρ*. Thales is the only sage he swears by: in his heart, I suspect, he does not at all approve of the miracle at Cana in Galilee. He came here in rainy weather when all the ditches were full, and the roads puddly, and he forthwith pronounced Surrey to be the only livable part of England. He took flight from our Surrey beauties, but it was only because we could not find one for him with a dropsy. Otherwise we might have bagged him. However by all accounts, he is the better for his washings, and if so, we must admit that the end justifies the means. I shall ask to meet him a friend of mine who never tasted water but once in his life—and that was in some Brandy and Water; I should look for some fun from their contact; though probably like God Canopus, the waterman would put out his adversary.

. . . . . .

Yr. affect. friend
J. M. KEMBLE

W. B. Donne to R. C. Trench

MATTISHALL
JUNE 29, 42

MY DEAR TRENCH,

I have been awaiting the arrival of the accompanying number of History to say how much I regretted my inability to accept your challenge to meet you at the Sterling dinner. I had appointed the week in which it took place for FitzGerald's coming to us and having lost his visit last year by delaying it, I would not defer it again. You have however to thank Mr. Coates in some measure for my tardiness. He publishes in April and sends me my own handiwork on the Biography 29th June. Do you see the U. K. S., *i.e.*, *will* you see it after Friday next, when the first half-volume will be published. I hope it will be more creditable to the contributors than A. Rose's similar work, otherwise I will have done with biography as a bad style of thing.

What a heavy blow on many accounts is Arnold's death. Incredible that a man should die of angina pectoris without any other warning than a vague presentiment (so it is rumoured at Rugby) that he should not live beyond his next birthday, the Monday after the Sunday he expired.

. . . . . .

I cannot help thinking that you as well as myself had our curiosity about Tennyson's new and old volumes somewhat blunted by having previously seen several of the best poems in MSS., otherwise I marvel at your disappointment at his not having entered upon and appropriated "some new domain of beauty". I have long had by me "King Arthur" or I should have exulted in its pure epicism, and as for your not liking "Will Waterproof" it crazes me. Dos't thou think because thou art virtuous there shall be no more "cakes and ale"? I trust one day to quarrel out this matter, otherwise I would convert you by a comment shewing its high philosophy.

We hope after all next week to reach the sea. Change of air will alone quite rid the children of tendencies to feverish colds, and I hope also give Mrs. Donne better appetite and spirits.

When you come to Cambridge you must visit us if we tarry here. "Justice Shallow will not have you excused." If we migrate I hope it will be some whither nearer to Gosport, as the "fugaces anni" slip away sadly without our meeting.

With best remembrances to Mrs. Trench,

Believe me affectionately yours

WILLIAM B. DONNE

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

MATTISHALL
JULY 4, 1842

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have had E. F. G. for my guest a few days; and, what is better still, Mrs. Donne and myself have been to Geldestone, and came away from it last Saturday full of pleasant recollections of our visit. But our return was not altogether propitious, for in coming out of Norwich our fore-wheel went

back to the city, while we were travelling ten-miles an hour to the country. No worse consequence followed than exciting the remarks of the market-carts, and a walk back to the inn. We formed a procession Catharine and Charles forming the infantry, the phaeton dragged by two blacksmiths, the pioneers and baggage, and myself, leading the horse, the cavalry.

Three years ago I used to boast exemption from the accidents of mortality so far as respected gigs, horses, &c.; now I can say with holy Paul twice have I been cast on the ground, once kicked over, thrice, save once, thrown off my horse, and once my horse jumped into another man's carriage. We have taken a house at Lowestoffe, and go thither on the 14th inst. It is in your country, so that you are bound to come and see us. Nor shall you need to take your ease in your inn, for we have a spare room, and a summer-house where one may smoke. I intend to make that summer-house as memorable for the composition of Roman history as Gibbon's *berceau* and acacias; I am afraid, however, I shall not write the concluding sentence of my work in it: a month will hardly do for a Punic war. By the by, though you read not history, you have probably seen or heard of "Sewel's History of Friends".[1] I assure you I took as much interest some weeks since in the account of George Fox as in all the "Kings and Kaisers" put together. He waged and won a harder war than Hannibal or Cæsar: and although I am too much addicted to pomp and vanity, or rather to ease and comfort ever to have been his disciple, I can find no words to express my veneration for him. . . . If you have not met with it, I am sure your neighbour the great abolitionist [Clarkson] has it, and will lend it you. Next to Fox my favourite reading is Bancroft's "Story of the Pilgrim-fathers" to America: their faith and calmness are sublime: more so than some of Milton, and much of Wordsworth. Are not the greatest poems perhaps incapable of verse? Our children are better. Mowbray, who was the principal invalid, will not indeed be well again without change of air, but his cough and fever are subdued. Mrs. Bodham has quite recovered from

[1] William Sewel, 1654-1720, Quaker historian. Author of *History of the Rise, Increase and Progress of the Christian People called Quakers* (published in Dutch, 1717, and in English, 1822).

her accident, and threatens to fall down on the next opportunity. She is 94 on the 6th inst. and very contumacious for that age. She seems to think outliving the Earl of Leicester a good practical joke; in some measure because she is—more shame for her—a Tory—but principally because she entertains a traditionary idea that he ruined the flavour of Norfolk mutton by introducing the Southdown sheep, and seldom fails to throw it in his teeth, or rather in his gums, whenever his name strikes on her auditory. I have now before me an order to write the lives of "Amandus Æneas Servius" and "Amatius". Giving these gentlemen the credit of having been excellent persons in their day, I must, in order to biographise them, ascertain who they were, when they lived, and what they did to have their lives recordable. And that I may ascertain these essential pieces of learning in good time I must stop at the bottom of the third page, with best remembrances to you from all at Mattishall.

Ever your's most truly
W. B. DONNE

IN RE "DONNE" A LUNATIC

A plain statement of a Lamentable case

A letter came by Friday's post, most legibly directed,
To "Lucy Barton, Mattishall" where, indeed, she was expected;
But having then no news of her we kept the letter one day
Intending it should get by post to Baber on the Sunday.

To post the letter safely we thought we'd found a wise man
Though neither parson, doctor, churchwarden, nor exciseman;
But such a man as any country-parish well may glory in
Commissioner of taxes, Squire, Justice, and Historian!

For *speed* we just as well might have a tortoise or a crab sent
Since, when he got to Norwich, this wise-acre proved absent:
And forgetting quite that Baber was the place the letter *should* reach
He sent it off, some sixty miles to "Bernard Barton Woodbridge".

MATTISHALL
AUGUST 31

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

MATTISHALL EAST DEREHAM
OCT. 23RD, 1842

MY DEAR FRIEND,

We are not ossified, nor entered as Sir Thomas says, "into the famous habitations of the dead," and therefore we have neither of these excuses for silence. Nor am I aware that any other excuse can be assigned for it besides my own laziness and procrastination. You are so good a correspondent that I think it will be our wisdom who are not so, to accuse you of some crime, and make the aldermen of Woodbridge send you a cup of hemlock, that you may no longer second our conscience by your just reproaches. "Dost thou think because thou are virtuous," &c.

However I could not have sent you very welcome tidings, had I written sooner, neither can I now. Catharine, who has not been well since the scarlet fever, this time twelvemonths, has been during the last month very ill. Inflammation of the chest, spasmodic pain, spitting of blood are symptoms that there is something serious the matter with the lungs, and though somewhat alleviated they have not hitherto yielded to the treatment prescribed. What makes the matter worse is that we intended last month migrating to the South coast for the winter and spring at least and now by this attack we are port-bound until the bad-weather and shortening days. The children are pretty well, but the prospect of cloudy skies and miry ways is not in their favour. So if it is possible we shall still flit, though M^mas^. [Michaelmas] is past. You must account to us for having been to Gorlestone and not descended the river to Norwich, and then to Mattishall. I take it for granted you have *not* been to Baber. I spelt the word wrong in my poetry, but I thought the place had been named after "the Great Mogul called Baber" for if you *have*, there can be no question about the propriety of a cup of hemlock. I wish excommunication were readier had in these days, not so much on account of your having been to Gorlestone, but on account of certain other of my friends who affront me by silence not for weeks, but of whole periods of time

running on for Platonic years. Among the foremost offenders is E. F. G. [FitzGerald] who has added perfidy to neglect. He induced us to prefer Lowestoft by promise of coming thither. He immediately went to Bedford, and since then has vanished. I am afraid not into China or Cabul as there the punishment of his sins might find him out. If he comes in your way apprehend him. You may do it *legally* thus. Swear a debt above the value of £5 against him, and take out a detainder. You may then lodge him in gaol, till I come. *You* may well do it since you have had sundry dealings in pictures with him.

I met two ancient ladies the other day who as befits their date and appearance are making a sort of antiquarian tour in this county. They questioned me as to what was worth seeing at Dereham. Cowper's monument was too modern for them, but the mention of three arches of the vanished tomb of Saint Withburga inspired them with great joy and curiosity. Now these arches are below the level of the graves in the Churchyard, and over a spring so icy cold that even in the dog-days you come out a snow-ball. I am confident that if they visited the bath they remain there, and I look forward to presenting the Norwich Museum with two splendid petrifactions.

With united best remembrances to Miss Barton,

Believe me

Ever affectionately thine

WILLIAM B. DONNE

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

1843

MY DEAR FRIEND,

The sight of your handwriting gave my conscience a few twinges, as I am certainly in your debt. Mr. Gurdon seems to have withheld the little knowledge he possessed of me and mine in order that he might leave me without excuse for my long silence. My wife since May has been extremely ill, confined to the house, often to her room, and utterly reduced in strength. . . . I had formed a plan had circumstances been more favorable, of making in my phaeton with my eldest boy a sort of coasting tour to Aldborough this summer. And on returning

from Aldborough I should have looked in at Woodbridge and seen with my own eyes your pictures and yourself. But this, which would be to me a real treat, must be reserved for happier times. In return for this unrealised purpose you can do no less than visit Bawburgh (pronounced Baber) "before the fields are dank and ways are mire," which would enable you at the same time to visit Mattishall. I had lost sight of FitzGerald for some months till your letter yesterday in-formed me that he had neither met with the fate of Lycidas in crossing the channel, nor been devoured by O'Connell, nor tossed by an Irish Bull. He haunts the same places at similar seasons of the year with the regularity of a plant or a ghost. Hence I look for his revolving to Geldeston in a few weeks, and swimming as Keats says, into my ken. Your picture on boards reminds me that some years since I nearly committed a very pretty piece of sacrilege. In the church at Castle Acre is a Pew pannelled with portraits of the Apostles in lively colours, and very curiously delineated. The clergyman, a sort of hedge-priest, would have sold them for a dozen of Geneva, had not an officious churchwarden reminded him that, although he was a successor of the Apostles, they were not therefore his to sell, and my bargain fell to the ground. Varnisht and vamped up —I am somewhat of a picture-cleaner and can disguise stolen goods—they would have made a gallant show. But it is perhaps as well I did not buy the said Apostles as I might have been hanged or put into the Spiritual Courts. . . .

Catharine unites with me in best remembrances to Miss Barton and yourself.

Ever yours truly
WILLIAM B. DONNE

The year 1843 ended sadly for William Donne, for his much-loved wife, who had been ailing all the year, became rapidly worse, and died on 7th December, leaving him, at the age of thirty-six, with the care of five young children, and his aunt Mrs. Bodham, who was ninety-five years old.

In January, 1844, W. B. Donne took his son Charles to see his old friends Trench, Kemble and others, as will be seen in the following letters.

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

MATTISHALL, EAST DEREHAM
FEBRUARY 5, 1844

MY DEAR BARTON,

Your last kind letter has been too long unanswered, but I am not the less grateful to you for its kindness. When one is moving about as I have been during the last month, days slip away and one readily imagines that there is no time for letter-writing. I have however frequently remembered my debt to you, and I have been rather dreading the apparition of your hand-writing to inquire the cause of my silence. I have been drifting about by the aid of fire and water in sundry shires: been across the sea to the Isle of Wight, where I was fourteen years ago much happier than I ever shall be again in this life: been at Brighton; been on board the St. Vincent monster of 120 guns: been in London in the Chinese exhibition which makes me doubt whether they or we are barbarians; been in the heart of printer's devildom in Red Lion Court which makes "gloomy Dis" no fable, and now I am here doing my best not to forget the past for all of the past I wish to remember, but to make the best of the present. Charles was my travelling companion most part of the time, and his journey has benefited him bodily and mentally.

Yes, my dear friend, you are quite right in saying that my dear departed Catharine was one to be loved even at first sight. How much she was to be loved is known only to myself whose affection for her began with our childhood. Her ill-health was the only drawback to as perfectly a happy union as was ever known on this earth: and even ill-health developed qualities in her which unbroken happiness might have concealed.

I found my children all well, our friends and neighbours had made the last month a season of change and relaxation also to them, and my good mother took excellent care of the youngest. We are now resuming our daily occupations but this return hither, and being here is and will long be a heavy trial.

Give my best respects to Miss Barton and believe me ever

Most truly yours
W. B. DONNE

Regards to E. F. G. if still within your reach. He tells me your toasted cheese is the envy of Woodbridge.

Bernard Barton to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
MARCH 21, 1844

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I cannot, for the life of me, recollect, with any sort of conviction to myself, whether I have or not thanked thee for a letter I received from thee soon after thy return home, giving me an account of where thou hadst been, and how, as well as divers and sundry things and places thou hadst seen, and concluding with some allusion to the toasted cheese suppers of Edward and myself as the envy of all Woodbridge. In a common way I should say it was quite impossible such a letter could have remain'd unanswered by me a week, but some weeks ago I had an attack of lumbago which made me glad to recline on the sofa as soon as ever I got away from the Bank Desk, and this put letter-writing out of the question for one fortnight. . . . Enough however, and more than enough of a sick man's babble. Edward FitzGerald has been a kind and frequent dropper-in, and his calls have been most acceptable. He has been ruralizing at the Cottage, and is now as busy as need be laying out his cottage garden, but he talks of running away soon for a short visit to Town as Thackeray is come there for a brief sojourn from Paris, and Edward says he must run up to see him. I try to hope, however, even if it be hoping against hope, which is desperate hard work, that the interest he has lately shown for his cottage nook may not cease when he has improved his garden, and the coming Spring shall have added to its attractions, for I am sure having done the penance forte et dure of habiting there in February and March, he has earned the pleasure of being its inmate when it really looks lovely in May and June.

John FitzGerald and his new wife (I mean Edward's brother, not his father) are just now inmates of the Hall, and John is giving at our theatre here a series of Lectures on the Prophecies every Tuesday and Friday evening to most overflowing audiences. I have not been to hear him, but Lu has, and makes a favorable report of his manner and matter, though not always agreeing with him. But I suspect my poor dear Lu has a bee in her bonnet, to borrow a Scotch phrase, touching the literal interpretation

of Prophecy, and divers elysian crochets on the subject of the Millennium, and the personal reign of Christ on earth, in which I cannot fully sympathise; so that I opine John's Lectures would not please me, even so far as they do her. . . .

With dear love
Believe me
Ever affectionately thine
B. B.

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

MATTISHALL, EAST DEREHAM
JUNE 17, 1844

MY DEAR BARTON,

You wrote to me twice because you were doubtful whether you had written at all, and I have not written once without any doubts about the matter. I trust however that during my silence you have lost the lumbago, and can leap and dance at need as well as usual. For myself I have been for some weeks past a dweller in chaos, not that I have descended into the abyss, or gone into any unfinished planet but chaos has come to me. My stack of chimnies, upon which the house mainly rests, gave unequivocal signs of wishing to come down a story, and expressed their wish once so very explicitly that I had no choice left but to send my children to Norwich, and to unroof, and discover why the chimney so behaved itself. Having secured our lives it was next necessary to ornament them. So I have had painters and colourers and carpenters and smiths and have sat among them in great discomfort—stifled with dust, deafened with noise, over-run with spiders, smelling of turpentine, and sprayed with whitewash. We could not cook, for the stove was down; we could not brew for the copper was not up. Accordingly our meat was "sodden after the manner of the Egyptians," and our drink would have been beer had there been any malt in it. At length everything is once more in its right place, and I live to tell thee.

I will take care to keep my house in order for some time to come, as it is enough for once in a life to have been so exinterated and annoyed. Are you parched up with drought in Suffolk

as we in Norfolk? The farmers may carry their hay this year in wheel-barrows, or in their pockets, and thatch the stacks with an old hat. Happy is the man who, like myself just now, has no horse. That I have none is in some measure owing to the village of Baber. For having a far-travelled friend with me I said to him one morning in April, "Go to. I will show you a German hamlet." And after we had seen the hill and the river and the valley of Baber my horse fell prostrate and demolished his knees and his nose so effectually, that I was glad to nurse him up for Swaftham fair, and take what I could get for him. Then I sold my carriage and harness, and now as the bankrupt gentleman said when he laid down his chariot, "I am on my legs again". And being on my legs I have taken sundry long walks, and been doubtless deemed a vagrant, instead of being a committer of vagrants to durance.

Mrs. Fisher's theatres have of late met with sundry fates, some being converted into breweries, and one at Bungay sold under a sheriff's writ. But the Woodbridge conversion of a Play-house into a house for the exposition of the Prophecies is the most remarkable diversion of a building from its original destiny I have ever heard or read of. Irving proved more than he dreamt of when he showed in the Morning watch that the Apocalypse was a Drama in seven acts, and that Jeremiah was a dramatic dialogue with lyrical choruses. I am afraid Miss Barton will consider me a profane person, nevertheless I send her my best respects. We are all well and I am

Ever yours most truly
WILLIAM B. DONNE

J. M. Kemble to W. B. Donne

CHAPELFIELDS, SURREY
2/9/44 [sic]

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

We have been shut up by snow ever since you were here, till the day before yesterday. Even now a "monster-snowball" compacted by the children and my men defies the sun, tho it yields slowly round the circumference, and to the great surprise of the young ones becomes rounder as it becomes smaller. What the d—— has the snow to do with thee and me?

This — you said learned things about clay bricks at which my ears pricked up. But before I can do anything with them, I must have such details from you as will enable me to set my brickmakers to work. What size are they? How long do they take making? How long drying? Must the clay be ground in a Mill? Must the straw be cut very short? When set up is any mortar used, and of what is it made? Is there any advantage gained by putting hieroglyphics and sacred signs upon the bricks, beyond the fun of puzzling future antiquarians? or will these, like the mystical signs of the Norwich fire insurance Office, prevent houses from being burnt down? Is it safe to put Woden's mark on the bricks? or rather as Thor's is a *cross* might one not perhaps succeed in *doing* both God's and Men by adopting that? Are there any Egyptians? On all these points I want advice. On the last I have thought of consulting Sterling, since your last report of his state of mind, only I fear he does not know Egyptians from Gypsies.

John Edward Taylor[1] tells me that you are to return to London about this time. If this be true, I hope you will so manage your matters as to let us see a little more of the light of your countenance at Addlestone. The good you do me by such a rubbing up of one's interest in one's own pursuits is not to be described. I have gone to work with such vigor since you gave me a fresh fillip, that I have actually disinterred the dates of half a dozen bishops whom I never could catch before, and in so far have not only greatly improved my Fasti Episcopales, but have helped the Apostolical Succession, which I hope will be duly recorded in my favor, when time and place shall serve. Joking apart, I have taken up the charters again with renewed interest, and have succeeded in clearing away some difficulties which lay in my way: for a clue to one name is often the key to a whole class of documents, and that is no small gain where everything depends upon accuracy and the genuineness of documents.

. . . . . .

Yr. affectionate friend
J. M. KEMBLE

[1] John Edward Taylor, 1791-1844. Founder of the *Manchester Guardian*, 1821.

W. B. Donne to R. C. Trench

MATTISHALL, E. DEREHAM
SEPT. 6, 1844

MY DEAR TRENCH,

. . . . . .

Should you ever write to John Sterling again assure him of my sincere love and reverence for him, I owe also much to him, which will always abide with me.

If you see our Review, you will find in the midsummer number a feeble expression of my admiration of his "Strafford". Alas! how few of the gifted men whom we have known seem destined to leave any κτῆμ ἐσαεί, and Sterling was one whose fame, apparently might have been safely predicted. This seems an idle regret in comparison with the great realities which are now hourly perhaps opening upon our dear friend, yet to the survivors it is not idle, since they may justly lament that his children do not inherit a wide reputation, and that the world has had only a glimmer of the strong genius which he possessed. For myself I feel as if I could neither truly joy, nor mourn again—yet I am in good health and with my usual stock of superficial spirits.

I believe after much enquiry and vexation I shall send Charles for at least a few months to a clergyman near Norwich. I hear a high character of Mr. Calvert, as a gentleman and a scholar. I shall still for a while tutorise the two younger boys, as I cannot run away from my poor helpless relations here, nor turn them over to my Mother, who has dependent nephews and nieces to care for. Charles however wants companions to encourage and discipline his naturally bold and active habits, for although a decent tutor, I am not a good companion in climbing, jumping, and riding, and I begin to think he might take harm by being too much with me. . . . In a year my circumstances may have totally changed, and I be able myself to accompany him and his brothers to a real public school, a plan to which I cling still tenaciously.

I am happy to say that my dear Blanche is well and comfortable at Mrs. Chapman's, at Norwich, and from all I see I do not think that I could have placed her better, and if Charles proves to be as well planted, I shall feel quite easy about him. Thank

God they are all well inclined and this year have been unusually healthy.

Time goes so fast with me, that on Sunday last I had some excellent advice from a gentleman in full orders, who on my first acquaintance with him had no breeches on, and who has frequently ridden on my shoulders sansculotte from Thornham St. Martin's to Thornham St. Mary's. I do not know that I have ever been more deeply impressed by any book than by the Life of Arnold. Making all allowance to myself for bias towards some of his opinions, I am sure that veneration for the man is healthy and legitimate. It illustrates the difference between character and talents. The will was remarkable in Arnold, it fashioned and developed the intellect and this is the proper relation of the two gifts but in the biographies of most men, the character is evidently modified by the talents, the will is secondary to the intellect. Arnold was most emphatically manly-minded. He needs none of the ordinary allowances for imperfection. His political opinions were not partial, his literary sympathies were not coloured by the age in which he lived nor by the authors with whom he most conversed. He sacrificed nothing to self, to ambition, to reputation. He has rescued the office of school-Master from opprobium for ever. He has elevated the functions of the controversialist and he has revived the simple dignity of Thucydides and Sallust. His pamphlets may become obsolete, his history be superseded, but he has transmitted this imperishable truth, that the government of a school is in fact the government of a nation, and that boy-nature in its narrower sphere must be trained by the same process as man-nature, if it is to be made capable of great thoughts and good deeds.

Ever yrs. affectionately
W. B. Donne

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

Mattishall, East Dereham
October 21st, [1844]

My dear friend,

In your last letter to me you expressed, or you pretended, great pleasure in the receipt of a letter from Mattis-

hall. Putting down two thirds of such pleasure to the credit-side of your good nature, I begin to think it possible that you may like to hear from me again. And, after all, your principle is a very sound one: for it is a great mortification not to receive a letter *daily* by the post. I had rather have a bill than no letter; for even a bill keeps up your credit with the office as a receiver of many letters and it remains at your option to pay it.

I am just now in great perplexity. We have in our hundred of Mitford a foolish society for rewarding the industrious poor. Now in the first place the reward is wrong placed. We remunerate labour but we want employment: and therefore it ought to be a society of the poor for rewarding the employers according to the plenty and rate of work. In the next place we reward people for bringing up the greatest number of children, whereas we ought to repay those who rear the fewest. These societies are an insult to common sense. But my perplexity is this. I am to preside, and distribute the prizes and preach the sermon. Now *our* Society is unluckily one of the latest, and every week the county newspapers teem with reports of similar meetings, and of similar sermons encouraging the poor to labour and the rich to employ. Every moral and theological is therefore forestalled; and, what is worse, this is my second presidency, and I have anticipated myself. It strikes me, however, that you may assist me, and be my "Magnus Apollo" on the occasion. The addresses are mostly rather *prosy:* why not try to exhort the poor in *verse:* and if so, why may not a poet help me. The method of address is the following; the poor candidates are called up and individually eulogised; and at the end there is a general exhortation to "temperance, soberness, and chastity" as the catechism—*i.e.*, not *yours*, but *mine*, hath it. I think it would be a novel feature in the proceedings to speak somewhat in the following strain.

"Hiram Smith—I do herewith present you with a crown piece
For rearing in your own back-yard a couple of your own geese.
Jonas Rump—you with the hump—come here and take your money
A sovereign is awarded you for never tasting honey.
Rump, like your bees you sweat and freeze and others reap your labour;
So with your station be content, my very worthy neighbour.

Henry More—afflicted sore of late with corns and bunions,
Has grown upon a rood of land a hundredweight of onions;
It does appear, that, for next year, you've plenty of bread sauce, man.
You'll let your landlord's game alone for all next year of course, man,
Elijah Wigg—your fattest pig is quite beyond rewarding—
But for your next, a sovereign I now am you awarding;
How comes it Wigg, you fat your pig, and are yourself so thin, man,
What I would do, if *I* were *you*, I'd with myself begin, man;
Eat bacon once in six weeks and—your wife she'd mend your tackling,
You pinch yourself to fat your hams, your sausages and crackling."

I think this is a very hopeful project, and I depend on your assistance.

With best remembrances to Miss Barton,

I am ever yours affectionately

WILLIAM B. DONNE

W. B. Donne to R. C. Trench

MATTISHALL, E. DEREHAM
NOVEMBER 10, 1844

MY DEAR TRENCH,

Your last letter affords me the truest pleasure. May you and Mrs. Trench enjoy many many years of health, happiness and usefulness, in your new residence [Itchenstoke, Hants]. I can understand some reluctance in you to quit your present neighbourhood, and on first reading your letter I thought that it would indeed be a severance of your Hampshire ties. For you wrote Hampshire so legibly that I read it North Staffordshire, then my etymology began to wonder what *Itchen* could do in the *Markland* and I consulted Lewis's topography, and by his aid discovered the true reading. You will not I imagine have more than thirty miles to move, and you will be near the railroad. You really however merit to remain a curate durante vitâ for your discontent. You complain of having only 300 parishioners. Had you been appointed Colonel of a Regiment, you might murmur at having incomplete companies and might quote Frederick's dictum that "Providence favors large battalions". But I am yet to learn that Providence favours large parishes: and be assured that, while here and there may be as

good parochial priests as your reverence, there is none who profits the church more by his pen.

. . . . . .

Yr. affectionate friend
W. B. DONNE

W. B. Donne to Frederick Trench

MATTISHALL
DEC. 23, 1844

MY DEAR FREDERIC,

I have sent to Mr. Moxon's a small parcel for you, and the next time your Papa has any books from him, I have no doubt he will send your parcel too. It contains a Bible, but you are not to regard it as a gift from *me* although I send it to you. You must look at it as a present from one, who is now no longer living, from one whom you never saw, from your deceased Godmamma.

She meant to have made you a present, and I have chosen a Bible for you, because I think it is the present *she* would have wished you to have. I doubt not you have a nice Bible of your own; I am sure, whether you have one or no, that you hear and read in the Bible every day. God has given you parents who know the worth, and meaning of His Word, and that it was written to be a light to your feet and a lamp unto your paths: and because every day you need such a Lamp, and such a Light to keep you from stumbling, and falling in your walk through this world; therefore I know you learn something from your Bible daily.

Now you will perhaps say, why, if I knew you had a Bible, did I not send you some other book? I will tell you why, and if I write anything you do not quite understand, your Papa or Mamma will I daresay explain it to you. I could not ask you to remember your late Godmamma, but I can ask you to bear in mind that, she every day read in her Bible, and guided herself by it, and although it pleased God to try her even from very early years with many trials, and to make the last years of her life painful and heavy, and although long before she died, she felt she must leave her children while they needed

all her care and love, yet she never murmured nor repined but was always patient in sickness and in sorrow, and always believed what was hard to bear and sad to think of, was sent in mercy; and so she was thankful even for pain, and good and kind to all about her, and cheerful although she long lived in great suffering, and at last when God called her away from this world she was able to say with her latest breath that her Saviour was present with her and supported her in those painful moments when the soul was parting from the body; and all this strength and patience and goodness in weakness and pain and trial was given your Godmamma because she knew and believed what God taught her in His Word the Bible, about His Son Jesus Christ, and about His Holy Spirit, and about Life, and death, and resurrection from the dead and so I have sent you this book that you may sometimes think of your Godmama and remember what I have told you of her, and I pray you while you are young lay these things to heart, that so when you are older, if God (as I trust) will grant you length of days, you may look back on your past life, with little fear, upon your remaining days with much hope. Beginning, continuing, and ending in the fear of the Lord.

My dear Frederic I shall always love all your brothers and sisters well, for your parents sake and for their own, but perhaps I may love you rather the most, on account of your Godmama.

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W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

MATTISHALL, EAST DEREHAM
JANUARY 16, 1845

MY DEAR BARTON,

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What Sir Thomas here affirms of the species generally, may

be just now applied to me individually. I am "a noble animal not omitting ceremonies of bravery" on occasions of — Marriage.

My cousin, John Johnson,[1] second son of "Johnnie of Norfolk" of happy memory, was married yesterday, and we celebrated the event with no ordinary ceremonies.

The marriage was at Catton near Norwich; but the bravery was at Mattishall. The Bridegroom, as the legacy of his bachelorhood, bequeathed a trust to the school children of his parish of Welbourne. As he had lodged in a farm house of mine at Mattishall, which contained a spacious kitchen, the ceremonies were held in this parish.

I performed offices seemingly incongruous, but in acts reconcileable with one another. Great occasions call forth latent capabilities; a little sous-lieutenant of the military school at Brienne became in a few years the greatest legislator in Europe. I am not sure that under more favorable circumstances I might have not been a first-rate butler or dancing-master. I handed round sausage rolls. I poured out scalding tea into mugs and cups of various shapes and dimensions. Some of them were evidently made before Josiah Wedgewood was born. I preached a sermon. I listened to Watts' hymns. I danced a brawl, not altogether with the personal advantages of Sir Christopher Hatton,[2] who did the like,

> When he had fifty winter's o'er him
> My grave Lord Keeper led the brawls,
> The seals and maces danced before him.
>
> His bushy beard and shoe-strings green
> His highcrowned hat and satin doublet, &c., &c.

Now I have neither seals nor maces, nor green shoe-strings, nor high-crowned hat. But then as Sir Christopher was Lord Keeper, so am I a Justice of the peace and quorum, and my beard is reasonably bushy, and I have a satin waistcoat, and

[1] John Barham Johnson, married 15th January, 1845, to Anna Morse, daughter of George Morse, Catton Hall, Norwich. Second son of Rev. John Johnson, LL.D., Rector of Yaxham and Welborne. Born 1818. Educated Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. Rector of Welborne, 1845-1883. Died 1894.

[2] Sir Christopher Hatton attracted Queen Elizabeth's notice by his graceful dancing. Made Lord Chancellor, 1587. Author of *Tancred and Sigismunda*. Died 1591.

which is best of all, I am *not* fifty years old. Then I played at Blind man's buff, bell the cat, hot-cockles; I flew a kite, presided over foot-races, hare and hounds, and scrambling for apples, and like Job's messengers, "I am left alive to tell thee". . . . I must not forget however our music. We had two pipers: and I think if one of them had whistled, and the other blown his nose all the time for the bass, their melody would have been equally good.

Ever yours affectionately
WILLIAM B. DONNE

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

MARCH 11TH, 1845

MY DEAR BARTON,

This is the day of which I said to myself before it came "On the 11th of March I will write to Barton on Church-matters". And now a hundred causes prevent my fulfilling my purpose properly. I have a new pair of shoes on, which hurt me; my stock is rather too deep; I have been robbed of a piece of salt pork; the collector has come for the Poor's Rate; I am summoned to a jury; my dinner digests ill; my flesh creeps; (dont you know the feeling?) my thoughts run on senna and castor oil; the stairs and the hall have been washed to-day; I am short of snuff; also of ink; I am too warm, but I cannot move my chair; I am to dine with some farmers to-morrow, and must smoke *their* tobacco, having none of my own. I am in a moral torpor indifferent to either vice or virtue, I cannot clearly bring to mind the difference between Supra-lapsarians and Rechabites, nor remember whether Luther lived before or after Horace Walpole. You must therefore pay no attention to any thing I write.

It seems to me, in my torpitude, that the question so long agitated, has through the violence of some, the ignorance of others, and the indecision of the Heads of our Church, resolved itself into a point for the laity to settle, as they did in 1641, by their representations in Parliament. Literal compliance with the Rubric would make a multitude of Church-goers dissent, and would lead the clergy who so complied into the perilous fallacy

of taking the accidental form for the substance. Yet on the other hand a clergyman is by his ordination vows and by the articles he subscribes bound to follow out this rubric, and our Bishop is clearly wrong in saying that he is not. . . .

Bernard Barton to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
MARCH 23, 1845

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Edward [FitzGerald] continues at the Cottage. The day before yesterday being a fine Good Friday, I waded through two miles of mud and melted or melting snow to get at him, and finding him luckily at home at half past twelve stopt with him till past six in the evening. He called a council with his old Dame of the Cottage, at which I assisted, as to what could be done on such an emergency about dinner, and we fared superbly—boiled salt-fish and egg sauce, with a roast wild-duck. Edward, being orthodox, stuck to the salt-fish, I, more lax, attacking the wild-fowl. The day passed pleasantly enough. Since I began this, and just before our tea-time Edward has dropt in, but is now gone to the evening service. His Boulge Parson being ill, they had no service there to-day, so E. felt in degree bound to go to church once somewhere. I hope our Woodbridge clerical will not keep him very late, but he will sleep here, so we must sit up half an hour later to make up for it if he should.

I fear we shall hardly keep our pleasant neighbour much longer in this vicinity. He is a vast acquisition to me as an occasional dropper-in—as poor Lamb was wont to say

"The sky does not drop such larks every day".

Thine B. B.

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

MATTISHALL, EAST DEREHAM
SEPTEMBER 18TH, [1845]

MY DEAR BARTON,

Your last letter to E. F. G. closed with the grave accusation of my owing you "many letters".

The d——l is said to be painted worse than he is, and you have reversed the injustice of the steward and put *many* instead of *two* in your bill. "I own the soft impeachment" and this one shall serve for payment.

At ½ past twelve on the night of August 16th, 1845, who do you think was passing through Woodbridge outside the Yarmouth mail? Among others was *I* myself, but had I known your door, and had there been time, I should hardly have cared to knock at it at such an hour lest you should have replied by your yard-dog or your blunderbuss. I believe the last time I wrote to you, I had been celebrating a wedding in low life—on the Yarmouth mail I was returning from one in high-life[1] or at least where champagne and pine-apples were in place of cakes and ale. We did not dance, or play blindman's buff this time: our pleasures were more decorous: chiefly confined to wearing our best clothes and eating and drinking. So there is not, as there was before, room or cause for any description of braveries: but as I was in some sort the bridegroom's papa for the nonce, turn to your Nicholas Nickleby, and see how Mr. Vincent Crummles demeaned himself on a similar occasion, and you will have some idea of my demeanour on this.

But whither was I returning on the Yarmouth mail? I was returning a visit, and on my way to Colchester. There it was my hap to fall in with a set of sporting men who mounted me a-horseback, confronted me with hounds, initiated me in farriery, and, what I relished most of all, furnished me with excellent cigars. After the labours of the day, which amounted to about 12 hours hard exercise—and to say the truth not without excellent provender both moist and dry—we used to adjourn to a metaphysical surgeon's to smoke, and one night I discoursed upon the apostolical succession till near dawn. I led a week of this disorderly life, and my liver apparently developed new functions, as my digestion ever since has been admirable.

And besides this I have been gadding about in the Eastern counties very extensively. The cause of this unusual locomotiveness is that my home-party is unusually small, and I could leave its members without much anxiety. My long arrear of

[1] J. W. Blakesley was married to Miss Holmes 15th August, 1845.

visits is now nearly paid: but I am still indebted to E. F. G., and my next journey will be probably to Boulge, and then we may shake hands without any fear of guns on my part or of thieves on yours. It would have been queer intelligence for the Woodbridge Chronicle that "a genteely drest man, name unknown, was this morning found shot in front of our worthy fellow-townsman's door &c. &c.".

Ever yours truly
WILLIAM B. DONNE

Bernard Barton to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
DECEMBER 20, 1845

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Edward FitzGerald tells me I owe thee a letter! The thing is to me so incredible that a note of admiration puts itself on my paper almost of its own accord. That I, who am so famous for my epistolary persecutions that folks are half afraid to write to me, lest they should be all but inundated by my responses should have owed *thee* a letter I know not how long, does appear to me wonderful: for I really set no common value on thy letters—ergo, my neglecting the most obvious way of obtaining one, seems to me next to an impossibility.

However facts are stubborn things, and as thou hast asserted this for one, and Edward reports it as such, so I suppose it must be. But there has been such a formidable hiatus in our correspondence, I cannot now recollect when or where we left off. We have interchanged epistles, I think since the Heptarchy, but not since the Revolution. I refer not to that when Jamie had to cut and run, or to that of France, but to the more recent Revolution in our own Cabinet at home. . . .

I have of late years exchanged politics for poetry, and made my last appearance in the character of a Rhymer, as the inditer of a Tome of quiet quakerly rhymes entitled "Household Verses," to be read, not sung, to the tune of the Urn on the table, or the Kettle on the hob, as my readers or auditors might be more or less genteel, as the phrase goes. I must I think have written to thee about these while my mountain of a brain was

in labour with said Mouse—and I am not sure that I have not now and then silently marvelled thou hadst never either congratulated or condoled with me thereupon. Truth to say, I might have challenged both. The "Athenæum" has given me a good word. A paper called "The Critic," one of mingled pity and contempt. The "Newcastle Courant" thinks me all but incomparable. The "Morning Post" taxes me with want of humour, truth, and an offensive humility, and last not least, one of our Quaker organs of criticism writes hard sayings to my disadvantage: for calling the Site of a ruined Chapel, hallowed ground: for having called the first Day of the week the Sabbath: for having now and then used the Heathen names of the months in my verses, and for having actually spoken in terms of commendation of Burns. Said I not right in styling myself a man to be congratulated, or to be condoled with? But thou hast done neither. So I will do neither by thy Speech,[1] Lecture, or Address, of which I have heard a good deal, but not read a word; good reason why, because I could nowhere procure a copy of the paper in which I heard it was printed, and a Friend of mine, who promised to get me one, wrote me word the day before yesterday, his efforts had been unavailing.

Well! I don't owe thee a letter now! that's one comfort; and thou owest me one, that's a still greater. Pray let it come before Christmas Day, that I may have thee in revived remembrance on that day of good wishes. I now send thee as many a priori, as this fag end of the sheet will allow me to put in and am ever affectionately

Thy sincere friend
BERNARD BARTON

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

DEC. 28, 1845

MY DEAR BARTON,

It is most certain that you were in my debt, if you reckon by single letters, though I believe to make all even I should have written twice for once. E. FG. was staying with

[1] *Address to the Norwich Athenæum* by W. B. Donne, 17th October, 1845 (printed by request).

me on the 14th September. While here he had a letter from you wherein you asked "how many letters does Donne owe me". I wrote to you a few days after this interrogatory, and, till Wednesday last, have never heard from you since. Neither was it in my power to congratulate or condole with you on your recent delivery, seeing I only knew you were about publishing, and but recently that you had published. I see not the Athenæum and only the Examiner and county papers, so that I am as much in the dark as the good people of Zebulun and Napthali of yore. Were I not to read your "Household verses" at all, it would be but paying in kind for your rejection of my "Roman history". But I will show how much more magnanimous an historian is than a poet by buying and reading your verses. Meanwhile I congratulate you on having published at all, which is always a relief. As Sheridan said when Mrs. Macaulay published her "Loose Thoughts" that "the sooner a Lady gets rid of such thoughts the better"—and, secondly on having met with fully as much applause as censure. When Mozart took his sonata to some capricious curmudgeon who refused to pay him for it, the musician re-iterated "mais au moins ecoutez-ecoutez donc" and this is the main thing—a hearing—and a hearing is what I never could get. I am glad you are more fortunate, and may your honours with increase of ages grow. That you may not however think me merely an historian, I send you herewith some verses prompted by his Grace of Norfolk's recommendation to the poor to take currie and hot water to warm their empty stomachs. His Grace said he had often tried his own prescription, but as he had probably breakfasted, dined, and tea'd, his warrantry was not exactly to the point.

At heart I am the most indifferent person in the world to politics. But as man must talk as well as think, I hold in discourse with the Democrats—"a wheen blackguards" as Caxon in the Antiquary calls them, "that are agin the King and the law and hair-powder".[1] I hate monopolies in every thing, and as I believe that the corn-laws are among the grossest of the class, and stand conveniently in the breach, I

[1 *The Antiquary*, chap. xxxvi.]

am living in hopes of their speedy downfall. They once gone, we shall get sugar and sound doctrine cheaper by and by, for the country-gentlemen out of mere spite will abolish the duties on Molasses and the Irish Church. Peel is a wonderful man: the only man in these days who can govern other men; his villainy delights, his steadiness gives me faith in him. He must not retire till the aristocracy have been further dieted and purged. And now the Tories talk of *compensation;* as if thirty years of profitable injustice were not compensation enough!

You will be sorry to learn that poor Mrs. Bodham is at last declining. I never think to see her downstairs again. She has water in the chest, which painfully affects her respiration, but I do not apprehend immediate dissolution.

Many happy Xmases and New Years to Miss Barton and yourself, from

Your sincere friend
WILLIAM B. DONNE

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

COMFORT AND CURRIE

I regret, Mr. Chairman, sincerely
To learn from the speeches to-day,
Provisions are selling so dearly
And all things in such a bad way:
I infer from the looks of each Member,
He thinks that throughout '46,
And even this present December
We shall be in a regular fix.

I shall have, I assure you, much pleasure
In giving the poor my advice,
As well as in moderate measure
Distributing Sago and Rice.
But they mustn't be nice in their eating
Just now with the wolf at the door,
Red herrings, they tell me, are heating,
And barley-meal cheaper than flour.

There is hardly a thing in creation
May not be converted to food.
Where's the use of so much education
If cooking be not understood?

On the banks of the Dnieper and Dwina
  You dine on the rump of a horse,
A dog is a dainty in China,
  And rats are "top-dish second course".

Captain Back in the North-polar regions
  Boiled his breeches and hashed his best hat,
And owls are as tender as pigeons,
  And snakes look like eels when they're fat.
I therefore for all this disquiet
  At present discern not a cause—
Provided the *poor* change their diet,
  And *we* do *not* change the Corn laws.

I should not, Sir, so long have intruded
  On the time of the Meeting to-night,
Had I not, Mr. Chairman, concluded
  You would like to have matters set right:
But before I sit down I will mention
  For the general good, a Recipe;
It is, I believe, *my* invention
  And certainly simple and cheap.

Take as much Currie-powder or Cayenne
  As covers a sixpenny piece—
This will save you the trouble of weighing
  And don't mind it making you sneeze.
Put this in a pint of hot-water
  And take it the last thing at night;
Half as much for your wife or your daughter.
  "N.B. Keep the Currie corked tight."

I take it, and so does the Duchess
  Before we retire to our rest,
And lately she taken too much has,
  And wakes with a pain in her chest.
We find that it quickens digestion
  And warms us from head to the toes,
Neither flatulence breeds nor congestion
  And though red doesn't redden the nose.

Then away with this fuming and fretting
  Better times 'tis our duty to hope,
By the by, I was nearly forgetting
  Curried water makes capital soup.—
And away with this whining and worry
  Times are not half so bad as you think:
Thank God! there is plenty of Currie
  And plenty of Water to drink.

STEYNING, *Agricultur. Apociat.*

The country was in great agitation over the Corn Law question at this time, and the act for their repeal was passed in June of 1846. Mr. Donne was all for repeal, and to aid the cause he wrote some verses for the *Examiner* called the "Pibroch of Denuil-Dhu" after Scott. I have been told that at a dinner party years afterwards W. B. Donne found himself seated next to the editor of the *Examiner*. The conversation turning on the Corn Law agitation, the editor remarked, "When we were sorely pressed at that time we were greatly helped by some clever verses on the repeal side, but to this day I do not know who wrote them". Mr. Donne laughed and pointed to himself, much to the surprise of the editor. "They were splendid," he said.

From "Examiner," 3rd January

WRIT OF SUMMONS

(Pibroch of Denuil-Dhu)

Members of either House,
Nobles and Commons,
You who have any *nous*
Hark to this summons:
If you would not have things
Go to old Harry,
Come, as you all had wings
This January.

Twenty-two, Twenty-two,
That is the day, Sirs,
Mind there be none of you
Out of the way, Sirs:
Come, leaving horse and hound,
Come from each Manor,
Ready to muster round
Buckingham's banner.

Come, without failing,
The crisis approaches;
Come up by rail, and
Don't be slow coaches;
For if you do not your
Places that night fill,
You may be very sure
Cobden and Bright will.

Be not as long as you were
Dull and tame sleepers,
For your hares take no cares
Trust your game-keepers;

Let alone partridges,
Leave fox and pheasant,
Mantons and cartridges
Just for the present.

Stockport and Birmingham
Breed worse encroachers,
Ten times worse vermin than
Lurchers or poachers:
Never mind, never mind,
Sessions, assizes;
Only come all combined
'Gainst their devices.

Come, as the sheep come, when
Turnips are flinging;
As aldermen come, when
The dinner-bell's ringing:
County and Borough-men,
Stout men and slender,
"Whole-hog" and "thorough-men,"
"Never surrender".

Leave the ball, leave the hall,
Kennel and stable,
Those who can't speak at all,
Are to vote able;
All can assist "the cause"
Hooting and hissing.
Guard, as you made, the Laws—
None must be missing.

Come in the garb that notes
Rural debaters—
Velveteen shooting-coats
Mud-coloured gaiters—
Twenty-two, twenty-two,
That is the day, Sirs,
Mind there be none of you
Out of the way, Sirs.

D.

Bernard Barton to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
JANUARY 9, 1846

MY DEAR DONNE,

I should have thanked thee for thy very welcome and most pleasant letter the day it came, but Lucy laughed me

out of it. "There you go," she said, "answering a letter the very day it comes, and a week hence you will be exclaiming—'What can be the reason I do not hear again from Donne?'"

So in the words of Holy Writ, "I held my peace, even from good," at least I refrain'd from any attempt at its utterance. But I cannot let thy second letter, received to-day, remain unnoticed, tho' I have scant time to notice it in, Edward Fitz-Gerald having just dropt in on us from Geldestone and been prevailed on to stop all night. So I have left Lu to keep him in talk for a few minutes while I scribble a few lines to thee, and knock off one or two other short notes, this being the last post night of the week. I will not attempt to condole with thee, in the common acceptation of the term, on poor dear Mrs. Bodham's quiet and peaceful release from protracted suffering and hopeless helplessness.[1] The event is one calling forth a sensation of soothing thankfulness on her account, and of grateful acquiescence on the part even of those who best loved her. Still I can easily fancy the blank caused by the removal of such an object of habitual solicitude, and long cherish'd affectionate attachment.

There were old and endear'd associations, too, of which you have good reason to be proud, connected with her. How glad I am, now, that I have once seen her. I suppose she was the last survivor of that little circle who might be looked upon as the personal friends of Cowper, whom his delightful letters have render'd, in degree, like one's own familiar friends and fireside companions. And the *removal of the last* of that band is not a thing to be thought of with cold indifference by any one who has thought of the whole group with affection and admiration. If Mattishall were only five miles off, instead of fifty, I would most surely have made one of the party tomorrow to show my respect for the venerable kinswoman of poor Cowper. What was her age?

I was delighted once more, dear Donne, to get a letter from thee, and charmed with thy verses. To make amends for any neglect I may have unadvisably? or even unconsciously shown

[1] Mrs. Bodham died on 3rd February, 1846, in her ninety-seventh year, having outlived her husband half a century.

the Historian, I am willing and even eager to award my ample commendation (to) The Poet. Only put forth a volume of such verses, annually, and I will buy and read as long as I can find money and time. And is not a Poet a much finer fellow than an Historian. Thy verses are capital, as good as any of Tom Moore's playful sallies in the two-penny post-bag, or elsewhere. But as to the corn-laws, I hold with old prejudices rather than new fangled notions. I hate and abominate the League, as I was wont to do the Holy Alliance, and think its monopoly of impudence, cant, patriotism and philanthropy one the most odious of all monopolies. So there my dear Donne we are wide as the poles asunder. I dare say thou art right in the political economy of the question, but I can only reason by my feelings.

Thine in haste

B. B.

W. B. Donne to R. C. Trench

MATTISHALL
FEBRUARY 12TH, 1846

MY DEAR TRENCH,

I take much shame to myself knowing the kind interest you take in me, for not sooner announcing to you the decease of poor Mrs. Bodham. She died after a fortnight's illness on the 3rd of last month of old age. Her breath had for some time been a good deal affected by going up and down stairs; otherwise she was as well as usual, and the breathing was rather the effect of the machine wearing out, than of any definite disease. She enjoyed the privilege of euthanasia as well as of a long and healthy existence, and, but for outliving so many of her family, I trust a happy one. Certainly no one can have merited wellbeing in this world more than Mrs. Bodham for a more guileless, unselfish and affectionate creature never existed. To me she was a third parent, if such a phrase is allowable and she was so associated with my dear wife that this more recent loss freshens the first impression of that unutterable one.

No impediment now remains to my putting into act my long cherished purpose of going with my children to school and combining home with public education. If I can meet with a house

MRS. BODHAM (ANNE DONNE)

1792

at Bury, Bury—not the weaver's but the martyr's—will probably be my séjour for a few years to come. It affords a good school, a splendid scholar Donaldson, and the objections to him will not apply to my case, a variety of masters for girls as well as boys, and a good market. To myself indeed the town is not very agreeable. It was as you know "my daily walks and ancient neighbourhood" for nearly ten years together, but the generation I knew has either migrated to other parts, or emigrated out of the world.

> All my friends are lapt in lead
> King Pandion he is dead.[1]

This however is a minor consideration in respect to the probable advantages to the children.

If possible I shall flit at midsummer, but I have a world of business ere then, for setting aside Mrs. Bodham's executorship, household gods do not easily seek Lavinian shores.

Southey says somewhere in "The Doctor"—"Shew me the man who has no taproot or preference of place, and I will shew you a rascal". I am that rascal for I cannot find in myself any reluctance to quit the place of my birth and life for—I will not say how many years. But this place is haunted and thronged with sad remembrances and my spirits always sink when I return to it.

I have lent your Hulsean Lectures to some Divines hereabout and all highly admire them, nor has the loan been prejudicial to your interests, since the volume has been purchased in consequence.

I meant myself to have sent you my "Address," but Charles begged hard to be the giver as a token of his pleasure in your beautiful gift to him. So I waived my claim in a matter in all but the intent immaterial. Do you not lecture in Cambridge again in April, and will you not come hither as you designed

[1] From Richard Barnfield's *Address to the Nightingale* (1594):—

> None take pity on thy pain;
> Senseless trees, they cannot hear thee;
> Ruthless tears, they will not cheer thee;
> King Pandion, he is dead;
> All thy friends are lapped in lead.

in last October. I am respectable, I keep a gig, not having JAMES Gowing[1] on the back, and can therefore meet you at Wymondham.

Yrs. affectly.
W. B. DONNE

Dr. Donaldson mentioned in the above letter Headmaster of Edward VI. Grammar School, Bury St. Edmunds, at this time; author of the *Theatre of the Greeks* and Lecturer at University College, London. He was an extremely able man, and noted for his witty sayings. I have heard W. B. Donne tell a story, which is mentioned in the *Life* of Henry Crabb Robinson, but I do not remember whether he himself was present. There were three brothers in Bury of the name of Creed—commonly called "the 3 Creeds". Donaldson said to Crabb Robinson one day, pointing to one of the three brothers, who was walking in front of them *with his hands behind his back*, "There goes Athanasian Creed". "How do you know?" said Crabb Robinson. "Why! by his damnation claws (clause)."

The Donnes moved to Westgate Street, Bury, in July, 1846, and W. B. Donne's mother, old Mrs. Edward Donne, gave up her house in Norwich, and went to live with her son and his motherless children. The eight years spent at Bury were looked back upon by all of them as some of the happiest in their lives. And the bright, lovable old grandmother helped not a little to make them so—"Dear G. M." as they called her.

W. B. Donne to R. C. Trench

JUNE 27, 46

MY DEAR TRENCH,

I migrate to Bury sometime next month, as I wish to be quite settled before the school opens on the 20th of August. You have flitted toto cum corpore; I have flitted too, more than once but never taken my goods entire with me. It is an awful dispensation specially from an old house inhabited for three generations by people who delighted in accumulating chattels about them.

I am sure when the people at Bury see what I bring, they will set me down for a retired pawn-broker, and when the visitors of my auction see what I leave, they will think Noah is selling

[1] James Gowing, W. B. Donne's tenant, was in the habit of lending his cart to fetch visitors till the Donnes had a gig of their own.

off his fixtures and furniture from the Ark. *I* am sanguine as to the feasibility of my plan. The school is rising. The Masters for girls are excellent. I have a comfortable house; and as my Mother is so good as to sacrifice her ease and quiet, I feel my anxiety about my dear little girls much diminished. John Wesley's injunction "Never let your children be with their Grandmother" does not apply to my case, as I do not think the Grandmother here spoils any one but myself. The boys are now all at home and grown in a very inconvenient manner as regards summer waistcoats and trousers. They will benefit by having companions at Bury, for here it chances that our neighbours are childless, or the children are too juvenile for play fellows. In short the root of an impossible equation is not more impossible than to bring a family up here. Poor Mrs. Bodham necessarily detained me, so long as she survived, but I felt the harm of staying till I was sometimes half demented.

Yr. affect. friend
W. B. Donne

On the birth of his friend Blakesley's first child Mr. Donne writes on 3rd July, 1846, to Trench:—

That caitiff Blakesley has had a man-child born to him these three weeks, and has never written to me to tell it. Is he afraid that I have the evil eye, and should blight him, or am I Lord of the Manor at Ware and likely to claim the lad as a heriot for my vassal! Had I not, contrary to my wont gone yesterday among all the fine folk at a Rose Show, I had still been in ignorance but I felt an uncontrollable impulse to go, and now I know why. It was ordained that I should meet Blakesley's brother-in-law there, and discover my wrong.

Westgate St., Bury
Aug. 4th, 1846

My dear Trench,

As the stones in Hampshire are not likely to prate of my whereabouts, or if they do you may distrust their tidings; I write to assure you authentically of my arrival here. You have migrated often enough to know that "arrival" and "settlement" are very different things. I look forward to

settlement about Michaelmas; meanwhile I am glad to tell you that our removal has been attended by no evil accidents either to body or goods. My choice of dwelling makes me at present very popular in my own household, and as regards myself, though I have naturally some regrets at plucking up my penates, I am well satisfied with the change.

The number of Trades I have exercised in my own person of late astonishes me, my genius does not lie in history or criticism, but in upholstery and kindred manual acts. I have earned my bread for a month honestly, and I regard my month's hard-labour with some pride.

I have one sitting-room carpeted, and a bed to lie on, and have had "losses go to—and wise fellow enough" and if I have not two gowns I have two gardens.

Next week I must into Norfolk to prepare for my auction. It will be some time in September. Put money in thy purse, and go to it. A power of books to be sold, for I have heroically curtailed my library to my dimensions here and sell all that is superfluous. Just as I am in the midst of chaos, comes a request from my Master, Dr. Smith, that I would write him some sixty Roman lives for his Dictionary, and in fact be his sub-editor, because forsooth he is going on his pleasures to Scotland. This is worshipful intelligence, but I am going to try and oblige him seeing that in the end I may repay my charges in moving.

Bye the by, I wrote to Parker some weeks ago, but he has taken no notice of my letter. Perhaps he is "asleep, or on a journey," or he is afflicted with the disease of "not marking".

With best remembrances to Mrs. Trench,

Ever yrs. affectionately

W. B. Donne

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

West Gate Street
Bury St. Edmunds
Oct., 1846

My dear Barton,

I am so hardened in sin, in the sin of not writing and not answering, that I cannot manage to blush the faintest

rose-colour, although I ought at least to be a damask or a peony when I think of you. I feel, however, most compunction touching my neglect of your last letter and the very pretty and welcome poem it contained. Up to that time I have some claim to be regarded as the injured man. I had moved in the hot season, therefore I might have had a calenture; I came into a wilderness of doctors, therefore I might have been anatomised or sent headlong out of the world on the usings of colocynth and calomel. And though you knew me to be encompassed with so many and so great dangers, you wrote not to ask "did I yet live". So up to that point I say I look on myself as the aggrieved but I have foolishly thrown away the inestimable privilege of a grievance and am fain to cry "peccavi" where I might have grumbled. And I have put myself to further disadvantage by not writing to you before E. F. G. paid me a visit. Now you will know all about me orally, and are independent of my scripture. Yet perhaps after all it is to E. F. G. you are indebted for even this eleventh-hour note; for his coming and presence dispelled a heavy cloud of gloom which a few days ago was on me, and which was at the bottom of my strange silence. We of the Donne race are all subject to eclipses of the animal-spirits, and when the cloud is on me, I cannot screw my mind to any sticking place whatever. Get your curiosity about Bury as much as possible excited by E. F. G. and if he will exaggerate a little, encourage him by all means to do so. For if your inquisitiveness is well warmed, the chances are you will take an inside place in the Ipswich coach and come hither, and it will be worth your while if it be only to see the churches, for though the George-fox side of your character may lead you to condemn them as idolatrous Superfluities, yet the poetical side will outweigh its colleague, and make you as arrant an admirer of their architectural merits as I am.

Here I have been three months and do not at all repent my coming. The school works well: the boys and girls thrive and look healthy: and I have more company than at Mattishall, so that my rust is wearing off, and by next year I expect to be as bright and polished as a new shilling. I confess too that I have a great liking during many months of the year for warm brick-

walls and flat pavement. I have long looked upon dank meadows and heavy ash-trees and they did not always or often suggest cheering associations. Now when I am satisfied with streets and people, I have only to turn my face southward, and Hardwycke heath is as far removed from the busy hum of men as one can desire.

I like your poem very much and thank you very much for it. I am also the possessor of an original poem by you which is laid up among my autographs. By and by when your anger is cooler, let me hear from you again and let our correspondence regain its original footing.

Give my best respects to Miss Barton and believe me

Very sincerely yours

W. B. DONNE

Bernard Barton to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
15 DEC., 1846

DEAR DONNE,

Our epistolary intercourse seems to have got on its old footing, which is apt to be a standing-still one—so I send thee a "flapper" to set thy part of it agoing. I am in the press with another Sheet-ling in the form—of—open thy eyes, and arch thy eye-brows,

A NEW-YEAR OFFERING
FOR THE QUEEN

How came I to think of such a piece of effrontery? I really did not when I began the Poem. I have been for several years a sort of Volunteer Laureate to old Father Time, by occasionally chronicling in Rhyme the birth of one of his Offspring or the Death of another, and I sate down to my New Year Ditty guiltless of any plot against the Crown or its wearer. But when I got to the middle of my Ditty, the Queen was brought to my recollection, and ran away with the rest of it—so I clapped half a dozen introductory Verses to my Lay and made a Sheet-ling of it. At first I was minded to copy it out in my best hand-writing, and ask Anson to present it for me in MS. without its going any further. But then a thought came over me whether the little

Lady would be likely with ease to read my verses—and what is not read with ease often is never read at all. Then a thought came into my head that Anson having so lately presented my "Seaweeds," might think it a bore to intrude me or my rhymes again on Regina so soon. So I wrote to him frankly asking his courtly counsel, and to learn how far he could or would be my Gold Stick in waiting. What does Anson do but apply to Her Majesty for leave to inscribe to Her, a certain little Poem to be called a New Year offering for Her—and then writes me word that Her Majesty most graciously grants permission! I'm sure she must have been in a good-natured, trustful and confiding mood, and has more reliance on my tact, discretion, and right feeling, than I could have assumed for myself with Her—for she knows not letter or line of the ditty. However this settles the affair as to its presentation in the most legible form I can give it.

. . . . . .

Thine truly
B. B.

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

WESTGATE STREET
BURY ST. EDMUND'S
DECEMBER 19TH, [1846]

MY DEAR BARTON,

Let me secure 3 copies of your poem before the whole impression is disposed of: and as I fully mean to visit Woodbridge this winter, keep them until you see me and my money. Our correspondence seems indeed to have returned to its old footing. But as I am the halting member, I wish to dwell on the subject as little as possible.

It is an old observation that *poets* are generally the best prose-writers, and hence it clearly follows that your writing *two* letters to one of mine is not an unjust proportion. I have heard of a man who could never read when the wind was in the East, and frost and snow have a similar effect upon my pen and intellects. Since it thawed last night, I am able to write this morning after a fashion. If the Daddy (Wordsworth) were to die, I think you would be Laureate: and when you are, I will come and help you to tap the butt of sherry. How would you

feel dressed like the people in the Bath-guide in bag-wig and sword?

By the way my profane *soubriquet* of Wordsworth reminds me that I have recently made acquaintance with one of the great bard's friends—Henry Crabb Robinson—and a most delightful person he is. He spends much of his time in Bury where his brother lives almost next door to me, and so I hope to know yet more of him. His circle of acquaintance ranges through all the great names of Germany and France. And he is not sparing of his anecdotes. But among the most delightful are his reminiscencies of Charles Lamb.

I shall soon expect a *morning-call* from you on my arrival in Bury, you are only, I think eight miles from Ipswich and Ipswich and Bury are about an hour and a half apart. The passenger-trains open on Monday; and come as early as you can, as the accidents usually begin about ten days after the opening. I had one devoted friend who came from Ipswich by the first luggage train some three weeks ago. He was four hours on his journey of 26 miles, and though he rode with the stokers and was blackened by the smoke, was well-nigh frozen when he arrived. If he encountered similar sufferings on his return, he was probably unconscious of them, as I plied him with warm drinks, and I will do as much for you, when you need it.

We are establishing a Public Library here and at present thrive extraordinarily. But the reading public is an unreasonable animal; and yesterday I was nearly assaulted by a clergyman of the establishment to whom I refused a book. Had he given me a black-eye, I should probably have returned it, and then instead of wading through this note, you would have been shortly chuckling over a paragraph in the Record, headed the "Modern Uzziah" and detailing my commitment to the Spiritual Court for smiting a priest.

Wishing you a happy Christmas and a New Year fraught with blessings.

I am

Ever yours sincerely

WILLIAM B. DONNE

Bernard Barton to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
CHRISTMAS DAY, 1846

DEAR DONNE,

I will lay by three copies of the New Year Ditty for thee, and send thee by post a copy into the bargain as soon as I can send one out to any one, paying due respect to Regina's precedence.

I am sure thy coming here will be an era in the annals of my biography and not less in the history of Woodbridge. Pray come soon, while Edward FitzGerald remaineth yet a sojourner in these parts, for he is more locomotive than I am, and not less lifted up in spirit, in the joyful anticipation of *The Donne Advent!* Being a Quaker, I can't consistently have thee rung in with the "*Steeple House* Bells" but I will set every one in my own a-going at thy approach with right good-will. I am off to dine with Edwardus at his cottage where his old woman is to cook us a turkey; her first essay in so bold an achievement of cookery. The same post which brought me thine, brought one from Horace Smith,[1] both echoing the same oracular sentence—

[1] In a manuscript book of W. B. Donne the following, signed H. Smith (probably Horace Smith), is written; the reply is in W. B. Donne's handwriting, probably his own composition :—

CRAVEN STREET, STRAND

In Craven Street, Strand, six attornies find place
And six dark coal Barges are moored at its base;
Fly, Honesty, fly,—seek some safer retreat
For there's *Craft* in the river, and *Craft* in the street.

H. SMITH.

Reply

Why should Honesty fly to some safer retreat
From Attornies, and Barges od 'rot 'em?
For the Lawyers are JUST at the top of the street
And the Barges are JUST at the bottom.

1

And why shouldn't Quakers be frolic and frisky
As well as those Christians who don't dress in drab?
So a health to "FitzDennis"[1] in punch or in whiskey:
In such *compositions* I own I'm a dab.

2

I rarely succeed in the line sentimental
In elegy, sonnet, hymn, epic, or ode:
If I find them, I presently find my rhymes spent all,
And sink like a coach, in a cross country road.

[1] Edward FitzGerald.

my doom to the Laureateship!—When the sky falls, Larks are to be caught. When the Millennium *shall have commenced* a Quaker may wear the Laureate wreath. My dear fellow, I shall no more be so bedizen'd, than I shall bear the Seals, and wear the Wig of the Lord Chancellor. "What would Mrs. Grundy say?" I beg her pardon; I mean what would be said and written by Bishops and grave Divines of the Puseyite Order on the nomination of a Dissenter, and an unbaptized, and unsacramental one too, being nominated to such an office in the Royal Household! Would there not be a special Meeting convened at Exeter Hall to avert the wrath of Heaven? Would not the Orators there rave about the abomination, if not of desolation, of destitution intruding into the Holy of Holies! and I know not what else. Nay, nay,

When Peel and Bentinck shall embrace,
And Wakley boast poetic grace,
When Sibthorpe shall be shav'n and shorn,
And Richmond's Duke care not for corn,
And Dan O'Connell rent refuse,
Then I shall serve the Laureate Muse.

Till then farewell.

Thine truly

B. B.

Bernard Barton to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
JANUARY 2ND, 1848

DEAR DONNE,

. . . FitzDennis (FitzGerald) has been our guest, with occasional intervals of absence, ever since Friday

3

I wished to indite on poor John Joseph Gurney[1]
A Monody, thinking it justly his due:
But I stumbled at once on that bad rhyme "attorney"
And left him to genuine poets like you.

4

But a health to "FitzDennis" is pure inspiration:
In a full bowl of punch, I will pledge him to-night
And I'll raise in his honour, a grey exhalation
And vanish like Jove in a cloud, from all sight.

5

Not a cloud damp and murky but "genuine Turkey"
Shall curl to the ceiling and wreathe round the room
And my celebration of this great occasion
Shall rival the Revel which you keep "at home".

[1] John Joseph Gurney died 4th January, 1847.

evening. The organist here wanted a Holyday to go and see his Friends or Relatives, and Fitz with his usual good-nature undertook to be Organist for the Day on this present Sabbath. But I believe the absence of the veritable one, and the substitution of his Proxy is known to very few. However FitzGerald's assumption of pedal and pipes implied the necessity or desirableness of a sort of prior rehearsál yesterday so he came to us the evening before, and we saw the Old year out and the New one in, as a preparative, by our own fireside. I scribble this while he is gone to his afternoon service, he will have another spell at it in the evening, and then his commission will have run out. From all I hear of the performance of the morning he will get through it, as I doubted not he would, in very creditable style.

Art thou not coming to Brooke's?[1] If aught should occur to prevent that visit, bear in mind thou wouldst be a most welcome guest either to Fitz or us, or to both. We all are pining for a palaver with thee, and Lucy sadly wants thee to see my Chalk Head by Laurence. As Johnson said of the Giant's Causeway, it may be worth seeing, tho' not worth coming expressly to see. But there are living heads and hearts here who would gladly give thee a greeting.

Thine ever

B. B.

A NEW-YEAR OFFERING FOR BERNARD BARTON

By William Bodham Donne

I sing of Barton—I who erewhile sang
Of Currie-powder and the Corn-law Lords.

BURY

1847

i

Bard! whose genial numbers flow
Well-attuned to weal or woe,
Cheering to the cheerful heart,
Soothing to the mourner's smart—
Thanks for thy "Verses to the Queen":
Sweeter, sooth, are rarely seen.

[1] Captain Brooke of Ufford, who had invited W. B. Donne to come and see his magnificent library.

Welcome thou in halls of power,
Welcome too in humblest bower,
Circling in thy song's embrace
Lowly lot and pride of place—
Thanks again! thy Verse is fraught
With winsome grace and wisest thought.

Thou through all thy peaceful days
Hast trodden wisdom's secret ways,
Drinking from her crystal stream
Thoughts that glow and words that beam.
With sights and sounds of common earth
And dulcet notes of household-hearth.

Thou, where Pleasure's motley crew
Glittering bubbles still pursue
Change that neither rests nor gladdens;
Hope that wearies, Joy that maddens—
Art not found—a stranger ever
To their void and vain endeavour.

But when over holt and heath
Morning pours her roseate breath;
And when Evening's dewy close
Veils the meadow, folds the rose,
Thou, with watchful heart and eye,
Pupil art of Earth and Sky.

Flowers that range the hedgerow wild,
Violets, hare-bells, cowslips mild,
Stars that gem the purple night,
Woodlands dim and waters bright,
Eld's experience, childhood's glee—
These thy spirits masters be.

And the Lore they teach, thy Verse
Aptly doth to us rehearse,
Grace to things familiar lending
Patience, Truth, and Love commending—
Sovereign, subject, each may be
Wiser, better, reading thee!

Greener with each gliding year
Bloom thy laurels, tuneful seer!
And within the chaplet twine
Buds of Amaranth divine;
Flower immortal! due reward,
And emblem meet for Verse and Bard.

[*William Donne, Bury*]

Bernard Barton to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
FEBRUARY 4, 1847

MY DEAR DONNE,

I have heard it said that a personal meeting between two friends makes it a moot-point which of the twain is to write first. I will scotch that snake, anyhow: for I value thy notes far too highly to lose the chance of getting one by not writing. I should have thought, felt, and written, as I now do, the week before last, when I had only a dim and distant impression of thy personal merits, and certainly that impression has not been weakened by our interview—au contraire it has been prodigiously strengthened, for it was so long since we had met, and then only for so short a time, that I was not fully aware what a fine fellow, and pleasant companion I had been all this while corresponding with. So lay thy account with my being a greater pest and plague for notes from thee than I ever yet have been. Does the "L——Gazette" ever fall in thy way? If it does, pray look into last Saturday's, and read the Notice of a Yankee Book of Travels, called "Views a-foot"; or "Europe seen with Knapsack and Staff," by J. Bayard Taylor. It is the same pedestrian I breakfasted with at Lockhart's, and that Breakfast is chronicled in his Pages. He speaks of me as "quite an old man, grey-headed, and almost bald," but says quite enough in my praise to reconcile me to my senility being notorious on the other side the Atlantic. I was so little inclined to quarrel with the man for having found out, and honestly recorded a fact, I am well aware of, that I wrote directly I had seen the article in the "L. G." to Wiley and Putnam to ask the price of the work, meaning, tho' I buy no Books to speak of, to buy that, and this morning these Yankee importers of American Literature have sent me the Book as a present, with a very handsome Letter. My companion of the Breakfast Table is really somewhat of a Hero. He was within about two years of being out of his Apprenticeship as a Printer when he was smitten with a desire to see the old World. So he bought out the rest of his time, and with about 140 dollars in his Pocket, partly advanced to him by conductors of American Papers, to

whom he was to furnish Letters reporting his Tour, he started for Europe. What more he might want he was to earn on his route, either by working as a Printer, or by further remittances from those in Yankee-land, to whom he forwarded the fruits of his travel. He travelled for two years, only spending, in the whole, 500 dollars. Now I really think a young fellow of 19 who could plan such an enterprize, and follow it out so fearlessly borders on the heroic. At that breakfast-table he had not one shilling in his pocket, for he reached Town the day before on his return from the continent and owns his finances were reduced to a frank and a half, yet he was gay as the gayest of us round Lockhart's breakfast-table, and his manners and appearance more those of a Gentleman than I should have dreamt Yankee Land likely to turn out. I would strongly recommend thee to get the work into your Library or Reading Society. Mine only came this morning, but I have already got three members of different Book Clubs here to propose it to their respective clubs. It is in two rather thin parts Octavo, but will bind up as one and cannot be a costly purchase. Of course under the circumstances it is full of faults, but I like its tone and spirit.

Thine B.

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

FEB. 6, 1847

MY DEAR BARTON,

Had I not been suffering since my return with inflamed eyes, it would not have been a moot point which of us twain first addressed the other. For I fully purposed writing to you to say how much I rejoiced in the exchange of our correspondence for personal intercourse and how much I enjoyed my visit at Woodbridge. "It is an ill bird that fouls his own nest": but certain I am that I could not have summoned around me at Mattishall so pleasant and intelligent a group as I met at your house not even if I had sent my servants into the highways to compel them to come in.

Here I am somewhat better off, and I hope it may be an inducement to you to come over ere many weeks are past. Our school-masters are worth seeing: they are not bushy-wigged and

unclean Dr. Parrs, but two little men as brisk as bees and as busy. The second master had like to have come to a bad end the very day he arrived—for he is a new-comer. Exploring the passages of a rambling inn, as Mr. Pickwick explored the White Horse at Ipswich, he fell twelve feet into a coal-hole, and he now defies all men and sundry to repeat the exploit without breaking their bones.

I will endeavour to get your "American Traveller" into our library. The Yankees seem to think baldness a rarity appertaining to the old country, for their papers could not sufficiently express their wonder, when L^d^. Ashburton went over about the Boundary-question, at the lack of hair among his attachés. Spedding's crown imperial of a cranium struck them like a view of Teneriffe or Atlas. I foresee one inconvenience arising out of your Trans-atlantic fame: they will be naming their niggers "Bernard Barton": and you nominally at least, will figure in some New Orleans journal as being "marked on the left jaw, limping on the right leg, and squinting considerably," with ever so many dollars on your head.

I must wind up as I find my eyes far from comfortable.

Yr. affect. friend

W. B. Donne

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

17/3/47

I

Bernard Barton oh!
Bernard Barton, bless me!
Is it really so?
Much your words distress me.

Worse and worse I'm grown
'Stead of being better:
I'd have laid a crown
You owed *me* a letter.

But when back I look
On your latest note, it,
At its right-hand nook,
Makes me rather doubt it.

There the date is plain:—
"Sixteenth Februàry,"
Making it quite vain
For me to say contràry.

Is there rhyme or reason
For so odd a blunder?
Should I plead—"the season,"
Bernard, you will wonder.

But while weather's cold
I am always stupid:
More like Saturn old,
Than like chubby Cupid.

(Mind though—there's a brick—
Neither's just my pattern:
Cupid is too quick,
And too sulky Saturn.)

Stanza last, you know,
Is, what's called a paren-
thesis. Now I'll show
Why my wit is barren.

The East-wind in its fits
Twirled us here like skittles:
Often froze my wits,
And often too my wittles.

Full six weeks the wind
Burn it! clapper-clawed me:
Now the weather's kind
But hasn't yet quite thawed me.

So you can't expect
Letter—such as nice I call—
Since I—recollect—
Am still half an icicle.

News there's none I fear,
Nightly or diurnal:
So a leaf I'll tear
From my pocket-journal.

Monday last, I went—
Bright day, not a dull one—
Much to my content,
To see Sir Thomas Cullum.

Such a house he's got :—
  Style Elisabethan—
Houses Green—and—Hot,
  Gods and vases heathen.

Fountains, Arnot-stoves,
  Rooms hung all with pictures:
Persian cat and doves,
  And such a lot of fixtures!

Tuscan tombs and jugs
  And—what some think finer—
Punch-bowls, dragons, mugs,
  And devils in old-china.

Gold box on gold stand—
  Sight that set me thinking,
Buonaparte the Grand
  Kept his pens and ink in.

But high time it is
  I to bed were jogging:
And you'll think all this
  As bad as cataloguing—
Puff of auctioneer
  Robins, George or Christie;
One A.M. is near,
  And both the candles misty.

So now, I remain
  Yours sincerely very.
(Author of this strain)
  William Donne of Bury.

Bernard Barton to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
MARCH 29, 1847

DEAR DONNE,

We have had a hearty laugh over thy verses, but I should have liked mightily to have been with thee at Sir Thomas Cullum's and seen all those fine things with thee. I can send thee no rhymes so humorous as thy own, but I post thee a copy of my last, though it is out of order for thee to see it before Edward, as it is addressed to him. His birthday is on the 31st, and just before he went to Geldestone, he made me a present of a pretty little jug to hold hot water, at my nightly

symposiums. As he is ever and anon giving me some little memorial of this sort, Lucy, all unknown to me, played Aunt Bodham and knitted a silken purse, which the chances are a hundred to one he will never use; however, I'm to send it, and I mean to send the following with it, for fun. I should say that FitzDennis is his "*other Name*" with us from his criticizing my Verses, as he is wont to do, and the last line has reference to Scott's "Pirate," which we have lately been reading together.

FOR MAISTER FITZDENNIS

THESE

FitzDennis, FitzDennis, thou'st given me a jorum,
Hot water to hold, when I moisten my clay;
So I, who *am called* of the Muses own Quorum,
Would fain, in some measure, thy kindness repay.

Besides, 'tis thy Birthday! with joy, not with sorrow,
I drink to thy health ere the grog can grow cool:
What a mercy it chanced not to fall on the morrow,
To make thee, by Birth-right, a mere April fool!

Poets seldom make presents, because they've no Money!
Could I give thee a reason more trite or more terse?
So, in true Irish fashion, "I send ye, my Honey!"
Fitting gift for a Poet, a poor empty Purse!

But a plague on all Pelf! I say not on all Purses;
My rhymes are exhausted, my time, too, is gone:
Here's health to FitzDennis! to bear with my Verses,
And to Minna! and Brenda! and glorious John!

CLAUD HALCRO

BURGH WESTRA
MARCH 31, 1847

There, William, wouldst thou ever have guess'd these to be mine? either by the Poetry or the Penmanship? the latter is caused by the lines being so long, I could not get 'em in, in what folk call running hand, so I am fain to adopt a more cramped one, but I do not think they would easily be guessed to be mine, nor should I wish it, for it ill beseemeth a Quaker Bard to chaunt about reeking Jorums, and moistening his Clay: only I thought it would amuse Edward; and as I think it may do the same by thee, I send thee a copy for thy own *private* and *peculiar* reading; this here not being exactly the style which I would have

enter'd on the Court Books of Parnassus, as the true Bartonian one.

. . . . . .

I am now deep in a series of brief illustrations of little Suffolk Views, engraved at the top of sheets of letter-paper for Lucy to send to a Bazaar at Belfast, to be held there next month. Trifles of this sort sell pretty readily under the name of Poetical Autographs.

Thine ever

B. B.

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

4/14/47
WESTGATE STREET

DEAR BARTON,

I found your letter awaiting me on my return from Norfolk. Yesterday I saw Mr. Tymms and he has just sent me a proof of your lines. He is a most respectable and well-informed man, and you could not be, for the purpose, in better hands. He shall print the Verses[1] as handsomely as his Type and Paper will allow, and I will send you, when the final proof is pulled, a sample of my taste and his skill.

The lines are very appropriate and will, I doubt not, answer the purpose admirably.

I have sent the strangest mixture of curiosities for the Mechanics Exhibition imaginable.

The spectators will inevitably deem me a man-milliner. There are 4 fans with pictures, a bonnet and apron of the time of George II.; a pair of shoes from Cuba; a bead-basket with much such a representation on it as Cowper describes on his sofa cover.

> There may you see the peony spread wide,
> The full-blown rose, the shepherd and his lass,
> Lap-dog and lambkin with black staring eyes,
> And parrots with twin cherries in their beak.

The only masculine part of my contribution is a portrait of a most surly Admiral and certain prints. I am afraid henceforward the Buryites will suspect me of being a kind of Pope Joan.

[1] "Lines on the Press," composed for the Mechanics' Institute Exhibition held at Bury.

I have let Mattishall for two years from next June. And as it is my Tenant's interest to be as near his living as possible—which is in the adjoining parish—and for the sake of his good name among his parishioners to cultivate godly life and conversation, I have no fear of repenting my bargain. And this reminds me that I must immediately write to the said Tenant, so shall make no excuse for abruptly remaining, with best remembrances to Miss Barton,

Yrs. ever truly
W. B. DONNE

The "surly Admiral" mentioned in the above letter was one Admiral Bodham, who, when London was threatened with another conflagration, soon after the Great Fire in 1665, sailed down the Thames and did such service in averting the catastrophe, that he was presented with his portrait and a silver cup. W. B. Donne's father, Edward Donne, once received a letter from a Mr. Barnwell saying that "as he possessed the cup, he thought the picture ought also to belong to him," but Mr. Donne most appositely replied that "as he was the owner of the picture, he thought on the contrary the cup ought to be in *his* possession".

Bernard Barton to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
APRIL 16, 1847

MY DEAR DONNE,

It was quite a treat once again to get a note from Thee. My unknown Brother Mr. Tymms has sent me a very neatly turned out Proof with only one typographical inaccuracy. . . .

Thy account of thy contributions to the Exhibition amused me much. I heartily wish the Scheme may answer. Mr. T. has very politely sent me a card of invitation on my own behalf and that of my friends, but I can no more get out than Sterne's Starling could, unless I brought Bank, Desk and Books with me, and so could keep on at my figure work, which would make a novel item in your Exhibition. I am glad to hear Mattishall is let for a couple of years because that implies thy being a Suffolk man for two years longer.

ADMIRAL BODHAM
1666

I still hope to get over to Bury for a few hours, but the when is hid from me at this present.

I have had such a high-flown letter from an American lady, now sojourning in London, begging an Autograph! It is almost as overwhelming as poor Teedon's praise of thy kinsman was to him. I was not aware before what an eminent and illustrious character I am, "not only in the European World, but in the Great Republic from which said Lady is just arrived".

Edward FitzGerald and I concocted between us a couple of stanzas for an autograph, but I thought the Lady might be hurt at them if they were sent, so I sent instead a sheet of letter paper with a view of Woodbridge at the top, and three old but unpublished verses of mine written underneath. I am very fond of this little obscure nook of a place, indeed I can hardly fancy how any one can live in a place above forty years, on more than tolerable terms with his neighbours, and not find something to like in a place, wherein during all that time much must have been suffered and enjoyed. I have as many local attachments as a cat.

Now for my verses.

My own beloved, adopted Town!
Even this glimpse of Thee,
Whereon I've seen the Sun go down
So oft—sufficeth me.

For more than *forty* chequer'd years!
Hast thou not been *my Home?*
Till all that most this life endears
Forbids a wish to roam.

Loved for the *Living*, and the *Dead!*
No other home I crave:
Here would I live till life be fled,
Here find a nameless grave!

Had every one spoken as well of his habitat, the old proverb of its being an ill bird that fouls its own nest, would not have been thought of; much less would such a libel have become proverbial.

Thine, dear William
Ever affectionately
B. B.

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

WEST GATE STREET
4/21/47

MY DEAR BARTON,

I am not sure whether Mr. Tymms has sent you another proof of the lines on the "Press". But if he has you will see that I anticipated your correction of *then* for *there* in the last stanza and made other verbal alterations. My great delinquency however is still to be confessed, *viz.*, altering an entire stanza all but one line. I thought the original inferior to the rest of the poem, but whether you will think so, and whether you will forgive me is a much more serious consideration. I expect, at least, a satire on criticasters and intermeddlers. Luckily we live not in pagan times, when poets were accounted wizards or I might run a chance of being served as Midas was by Apollo.

We had a very pleasant opening last night of the Exhibition. The country gentlemen and townsfolk most liberally imparted their stores, and the room displayed a really beautiful coup d'œil. Now is your time to run over to Bury and see some very nice pictures. Holbein, Salvator, Rembrandt and Carlo Dolce have all their representatives and there are too some very interesting historical portraits. I do not mean however that your running over *now* shall prejudice your visit in the summer. For then I hope Miss Barton will accompany you, whereas at this moment I have only lodging for one, my chamber of Dais being occupied by an invalid. Your poem was announced to the spectators last night, and as a general desire was expressed to hear it, a reader was needed. But straightway all began to make excuse, one had a cold, another wanted courage, a third his tea,—so having cobbled your verses I thought I might as well, as Jaques says, "mar them by reading them ill-favouredly". I gave them my best emphasis and energy, and they were cordially applauded. But I should not wonder if either you or I were saddled with a judgment. The exhibition-Room was originally a theatre: the platform on which I recited was the very ground once occupied by the stage, and many thousand verses had of yore been spouted thereon "by the harlotry-players".

This coincidence is enough to make George Fox's bones rattle in their grave.

I like the verses on your deceased friend at Colchester. But you might mend them by a little revision. I suspect, however, if I am so critical, that you will dub me FitzBentley.

Ever yours truly
WILLIAM B. DONNE

I observe on looking at your last note that you say "it is quite a treat to see a note again from me"! Waiving the implied compliment, give me leave in the most delicate way in the world to add that you are an unreasonable monster. Have you not had of late two letters in rhyme, each of which is equivalent to three in prose, and consequently you have *six* notes from me, not counting the present, since "sixteenth February".

Bernard Barton to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
APRIL 23, 1847

MY DEAR FITZBENTLEY,

I shall certainly be in danger of being "lifted up in spirit," if there be much danger of my verses being read in public by thee; yet on the other hand that hour may minister to humility, for the applause so cordially awarded might be quite as much given to the manner in which they were read, as to the Verses themselves. At any rate I will assume that such was the fact, to keep my authorly vanity in check. But all joking apart, I thank thee heartily for having been my Reader. I would not have taken the job in hand for a trifle, even if they had *not* been my own. I thank thee, too, for thy alterations which are all emendations, especially the most important one of them all. I did not much like the image of the telegraphic wire, and only used it as expressive of the rapidity with which the Press diffuses its store of information. But it is, I frankly own, forced and inapplicable.

. . . . . .

Thine ever affectionately
B.

J. W. Blakesley to W. B. Donne

WARE VICARAGE
APRIL 23, 1847

MY DEAR DONNE,

Vanity, avarice, and friendship unite their forces in disposing me to avail myself of Donaldson's offer to examine Bury School. But I must resist all three; for the time which he names is exactly that in which I expect the apparition of Mrs. Gamp in my house; and I am told that it is impossible for me under the circumstances to leave home.

I was extremely sorry to find that you had deferred your visit to Trench; for I was anxious to see you here, and introduce you to my first-born; who is not without his merits. Moreover I should be very glad to bring you into contact with Empson,[1] who has a good deal to do with the "Edinburgh Review," and I cannot help thinking that it would be to the advantage both of it and you to establish a connexion with one another. It appears to me that the editorship of a Quarterly Periodical is, of all literary *labour*, that likely to be most tolerable, and such a position would I think eminently suit you.

I am very glad to find that you have not been deterred by Donaldson's omniscience from discovering the better parts of his character. I believe him really to be a good-natured fellow, and if he did not pretend to know about 100 times as much as he does, he would enjoy a high reputation on the strength of that centesimal part, and also a deserved one.

. . . . . .

Believe me, dear Donne
Yrs. affectly.
J. W. BLAKESLEY

Bernard Barton to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
APRIL 29, 1847

MY DEAR DONNE,

I am somewhat pent for time tonight, as Lu is gone out to tea next door, and I promised to drop in after that

[1] William Empson, 1791-1852, editor of the *Edinburgh Review* from 1847-1852; Professor of General Polity and the Laws of England at the East India College, Haileybury, 1824-1852.

shadowy refection was over. But if I write not, it might seem as if I quarrelled with my Bantling's Dry Nurse, which I do not. Many of thy alterations in my verses are decided improvements, and by none of them is my poor ditty in any degree marr'd. I really think I should make a very decent Poet if I had a Fitz-Dennis, or a FitzBentley (W. B. Donne) ever at my elbow to lick my cubs into shape and comeliness for me. I am ill at that work. When I have once given vent to the feeling or thought which haunted me 'till it found utterance, after its own rude fashion, I seem to care no more about it, and revision and correction are a sort of penance verging on actual martyrdom. I am just such a poet as my neighbour Tom Churchyard is an artist. He will dash you off slight and careless sketches by the dozen, or score, but for touching, re-touching, or finishing, that is quite another affair, and has to wait, if it ever be done at all. Of course we are a couple of lazy slovenly artistes, for our want of pains, but as the old proverb has it "There is no making a silken Purse out of a Sow's ear". Many thanks for the "Herald," and pray have the goodness to thank Mr. Tymms for the "Post". I read the full and copious Report with much interest.

Farewell affectionately

Ever thine

B. B.

J. W. Blakesley to W. B. Donne

MAY 4, 1847

MY DEAR DONNE,

I was in London yesterday and saw Empson; and had some conversation with him relative to you and the Edinburgh Review, of which he is the Provisional, and will probably become the permanent Editor. He is very desirous to enter into some engagement with you, of such a kind as I think likely to be acceptable to you, *viz.*, that you should furnish him at your leisure with some articles on any subject which you are pursuing (and which will admit of articles being written on it) which will admit rather of immediate insertion, or of a delay for a quarter or a half year. I told him that you had written several articles in the British and Foreign, &c. I think it would be as well for you to name them when you write to him. His address is Professor Empson, Hayleybury College, Hertford.

Bernard Barton to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
JUNE 12, 1847

MY DEAR DONNE,

I have never heard of or from thee since I wrote thee my thanks for cutting up some verses I sent thee as a sort of Requiem for a near and dear friend of mine; and I really think the readiness with which I submitted to thy critical dissection on that occasion, ought to have elicited thy special commendation; considering that from the time of the appeal made by those two Mothers to Solomon; few, if any parents have been found willing to submit their offspring to such an operation. But I can forgive thy sins of commission, sooner than thy sins of omission; and much more readily pardon thy FitzBentleyism than thy taciturnity. So I send thee another piece of rhyme to cut up, rather than not hear from thee.

The Publisher of the Ipswich Pocket Book came over the other day to see if I could help with pictorial as well as poetical illustration for his Pocket Book; and I have lent him an old oil sketch of Aldbro' from the Terrace to engrave for his P. B. to the which I am minded to attach the following

SONNET

Aldborough: from the Terrace

Thy old Moot-Hall is but a relique hoar;
Thy time-worn Church stands lonely on its hill;
And he who sojourns here when winds are shrill
In winter, peradventure might deplore
The poor old Borough—Borough now no more!
Yet, on a summer day, 'tis pleasant still
From this far eminence to gaze at will
Over the Town below, and winding Shore!
For Poesy's own spells yet haunt the place
With *Crabbe's* undying Memory entwined;
While Earth, and Sea, and Sky, with powers combined,
Lend to the scene around their sterner grace:
Nature! What can thy Sovereignty efface?
O'erwhelm, in Lethe's wave, *A Master Mind?*

There! I don't call that a despicable fourteener, considering how much and how often I have rhymed about old Crabbe:

which in truth drove me to the expedient of only sonnet-izing him; lest I should repeat myself beyond all the bounds of endurance. Talking of old Crabbe puts me in mind of his son whom I met awhile ago at Boulge Cottage.

Edward had axed him to meet one or two of us there, and his acceptance of the invitation ran thus, as nearly as my memory serves:—

As sure as a gun
I'll be in at the fun;
For I'm the old Vicar
As sticks to his liquor;
And smokes a cigar,
Like a jolly Jack Tar:
I've no time for more,
For the Post's at the door;
But I'll be there by seven,
And stay 'till eleven,
For Boulge is my Heaven!

Is not that "rich and rare"? I would not let every one see it, but I copy it for thy own private reading, because I am sure thou wilt read it with a liberal toleration, and wilt not suppose the good old Vicar to be a Bacchanalian, when he only meant, con amore, to express his hearty willingness to be social. But certain ill-disposed folks might take it literally, and quarrel with, and misconstrue its heartiness.

Thine truly
B.

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

JUNE 18TH, 1847

MY DEAR BARTON,

You may have cause to complain, but I have had much more: for, like the unmerciful servant, I have been in the hands of the tormentors.

A gigantic double-tooth—a mammoth indeed, at the further and lower extremity of my jaw—has been extracted. Knowing by experience that it is almost as easy to remove mountains as my grinders, I besought the operator to give me Ether. But lo! the vanity of hopes and the villainy of quackeries. The Ether

far from somnolency produced a fierce kind of intoxication and my tooth was drawn while I was in a kind of prophetic fury. Nor was this all. The tooth was so curiously and impertinently strapped and pegged in, that the extraction splintered my jaw-bone and sprung an artery, and I bled so long and copiously that I began to think I should die the death of Seneca and other noble Romans, and perhaps it would have been a seemly end for a Roman historian. Luckily I had a most skilful surgeon, for, joking apart, it was rather at one time a grave matter. The upshot of all this bleeding, lacerating and splintering has been to throw me into a kind of low fever, from which only yesterday I began really to amend.

I cannot improve your sonnet: so I meddle not with it. You would never need extraneous correction, if you would keep your verses by you a while and retouch them yourself: and, believe one who has had some experience both in correcting his own and other folk's prose, no one is so good a judge as the author's self. Poetry retouched by a second hand is like Mogul china. The real artist furnishes the fine clay and the delicate outline. Then comes your Dutchman, the critic, and blotches over with his purple and gold the China-man's idea. Go then one fine morning to Cambridge and to Trin. Coll. Library, and ask to see the Milton MSS. These are one blot of pentamentos. So are Spenser's and Ariosto's. I have been to London lately, and heard and saw Jenny Lind.[1] *I would be of no religion that interdicted me from hearing such a divine creature.* "Think of that, Master Brooke." I suffered almost penal torments in getting into the opera house, and while there from heat, pressure and struggling. But had I been under Juggernaut's car, her voice and look and movements would have caused the wheels to pass innocuously over me. I think of putting on my tomb-stone, "He saw Jenny Lind". It is an order of merit for Life. My opinion of the *cleaned* pictures at the National Gallery—a question mooted while I was at Woodbridge—is that they *have* been injured. Eyes that once

[1] Jenny Lind, 1820-1887. Born at Stockholm. Her first appearance in London, 1847. Married in 1852 to Mr. Otto Goldschmidt, of Hamburg. Last appearance, 1883.

floated insensibly into your inmost heart now stare at you—and so forth.

With best remembrances to Miss Barton,

Ever yrs. most truly
WM. B. DONNE

WESTGATE ST.
JUNE 18TH.

Bernard Barton to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
JUNE 20, 1847

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Thou wouldst be of no religion which interdicted thee from hearing Jenny Lind! Very likely not, yet I am by no means sure the Quakers have done wrong in proscribing the Opera as a place of resort to their Sect. 'Tis an Augean Temple of Dissipation which not even the "angel visits few and far between" of one pure spirit can render a desirable rendezvous to Christian folk. At least so it strikes me in my happy ignorance of its attractions. . . . This is rather a long and prosy comment on thy brief remark, which after all, as well as much of its context, I set down as badinage. But as one of a Sect who are regarded by thee as interdicting the hearing of Jenny Lind, I could not refrain from a statement of the *why* and the *wherefore*. "It's no fish ye're buying, 'its Men's lives," quoth Maggie Mucklebackit to Monkbarns. So I would say to lots of Jenny Lind's hearers. It is not Nature, Simplicity, Purity and Truth that you idolize, but one who, gifted with these, ministers to your gratification independently if not in spite of them all.

And now having worked off a little of the esprit de corps called forth by thy hit at my "interdictory Religion," I cannot do less in Christian Charity than condole with thee on thy having fallen into the hands of the Philistines. It's a mercy they did not pull thy head off instead of lacerating and splintering a portion of it. By-the-bye, I *infer* all these complicated calamities befel thee *after* thy going to see and hear Jenny. *I* will not affect to regard it as a judgment on thee for going to that naughty place and sitting there to hear their singing Men (poor emasculated bodies) and singing Women! Though some

of the "unco guid" might trace a connecting link of cause and effect; and argue profoundly concerning hot and crowded Houses and cold caught on coming out of them, still, I daresay the Tormentors might have been let loose on thee hadst thou been both ear-less, and Lind-less, like unto myself. But when I read of thy putting thyself with all due complacency under Juggernaut's car, unconscious of its pressure in listening to her Siren strains; and of thy proposed Epitaph, I involuntarily said to myself, "Poor fellow! he is still under the influence of that 'ethereal' draught!" By-the-bye, I think of having recourse to it, for I am about to be delivered over to the Tormentors myself. My daughter has been plotting against me, calling in FitzDennis to her aid; and between them it has been agreed that Edward's friend Laurence, the artist, is to come down on a three or four days' visit to Boulge Cottage, and while there he is to drop in on us between whiles, and make a copy of my cranium and phiz in Crayons. I have sat to five or six inferior brothers of the brush, a priori, and have never yet had two portraits taken in any degree like each other or like me, so I think it very likely the thing will be a failure, and the sitting is a sad bore, but I had promised Lucy a five-pound note towards a tour she was going to make, and she has chosen to put ten pounds of her own to it, and throw the whole fifteen away on this absurd Spec! when she might have gone to hear Jenny three nights for the money, which, to her, would have been a treat. When the resolve assumed this aspect, there was no alternative on my part but submission, tho' it is that sort of assent Crabbe talks of "At best that sad submission to our doom which, turning from the evil, lets it come".

However, my comfort is, even if the worst comes to the worst, that a Crayon sketch may be endured, and survived. Besides Laurence may not be able to get away from town where he seems to have plenty to do. But he has to go down into Norfolk to take some Barclay folk, and talks of taking my head off, on his way. Time, however, will prove whether this be practicable, and I shall be well content if the reverse be found to be the result. Edward FitzGerald, I think I wrote thee word, is gone to see the Kerrich tribe. I heard from him

yesterday, enclosing a note he had received from his artist friend, to the effect that his only chance of giving him a look was by taking him in his way to or from Norwich, and Edward said he should write and nail him at once, that is, as soon as E. shall have returned, which will take place I believe the end of this week. So I hope for a Note from thee to keep my spirits up, if thou hast forgiven this long infliction and my Heresy touching thy Lind Idolatry.

Thine ever, at all events

B. B.

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Because I lightly thrust at thee with a foil, you have caught up cudgels and banged me with usury. Oh man of much zeal for the truth, did you imagine that I really meant any disrespect to you or your church, which I most truly reverence, letting alone my private regard for Thee? Did you ever know me hesitate between my friend and my jest? It is a foolish knack I have to say unseasonable things. I am often on the stool of repentance for this cause: and I stand on it now in this "Linden" matter. "Be merciful, great Duke, to men of mould," and be assured that when I hurt any one's feelings and discover it, my own suffer much more. I admire Miss Barton's filial piety, and rejoice infinitely at it, as I shall reap the fruits one day or other in seeing you worthily limned. You could not have a better man than Laurence. He will paint the real man, the man whom strangers to him may read if they have the gift. But mind and do not put on a face for the occasion. Think of some pleasant passage in Lamb's or Cowper's letters and chew the cud upon it while you are sitting. It is my daily grief that I have no picture of my dear Catharine. Therefore because her noble and handsome lineaments are without record, have I vowed that no one shall ever induce me to have my common-place phiz perpetuated.

On reading your note again I suspect you of being a wolf in sheep's-clothing, and that your virtuous wrath against the mass of opera-goers springs from actual acquaintance with the scene.

You speak of the enthusiasm awakened by Jenny in almost the same words as an experienced frequenter of that house used to me, when I was describing the excitement I beheld. "Half of it," he said, "was affectation, for half the Dukes and Dowagers were stone-deaf, and just waked up to clap." As for the exaggeration of "Juggernaut's car," you should see a note I received from a young gentleman of sixty. His creed is that Jenny came straight down from heaven and he seems disposed to found a Lindian religion and be its first apostle. I am cool and calm in the faith compared to many of my friends.

Who is Mr. Brooke of Ufford, near Woodbridge, who has asked me to come and see him?[1] A strange question this, but we only know each other by meeting at Sir Thos. Cullum's and by bibliomania.

Bernard Barton to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
JUNE 22, 1847

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I assure thee thou hast said or written nought to hurt my feelings. For what says Cowper, "A modest, sensible, and well-bred man (and such I have ever found Thee), *will not* offend me, and no other *can*".

I only wrote as I did, professionally, to vindicate the interdictory Creed, or rather practice, of my un-*opera*-tive Fraternity. If thou couldst for a moment suppose it possible I dreamt of taking to myself, personally, the hit referr'd to, thou almost deserv'st to have another fang drawn!

. . . . . .

"If it be possible, as far as in me lieth," I will ere the summer be ended, and the Harvest gathered in, run down, or up (I forget which 'tis), to Bury, but the utmost I could do would be to leave here on a Friday and come back again on Saturday night. On the Sunday we have no coach from or *to* this place, by which I could return. So one night and a portion

[1] Captain Brooke of Ufford, near Woodbridge, possessed a magnificent library of more than 20,000 volumes, and nothing gave him greater pleasure than to place his books at the disposal of readers and students. He was a friend of Edward FitzGerald, who called him "our one man of books down here".

of two days is all I see a ghost of a chance of giving thee. But we may have a world of talk in even that section of time. So lay out thy plans, my dear fellow, and follow them irrespectively of such desk-bound, and house-bound mortals as we: only letting me so much into the light of thy out-goings, and in-comings, as to enable me, if I can steal those two days (whenever they shall dawn on me) that I may calculate with tolerable certainty on finding thee at home. If I can work upon FitzDennis, supposing him then to be "to the fore," to go with me to Bury, I gladly will do so. This is all I can now say or do Bury-ward.

. . . . . .

Thine truly

B.

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

I

Oh! what's the matter, what's the matter,
Why what can ail good Bernard B.?
'Tis ten days since he had my letter
And answer none returned has he.

II

Oh! has he got again rheumatics—
Or lost a tooth by chloroform—
Or frightened been by drab schismatics
And vowed his conduct to reform?

III

(The first act of his reformation—
The act *they* most insisted on—
Being to cut all conversation
With Mr. William Bodham Donne.)

IV

Oh! has he cudgelled Brooke of Ufford?
Because Brooke's masons were so slow,
Whereby the said B. B. has suffered
Alike, as guest and host, "No Go".

V

Has Mr. Vernon sent more verses
For Bernard B. to shape and polish:
Or have the Whigs, the nation's curses,
His pension threatened to abolish?

VI

That thus he sitteth mute and mumchance
And answer none returns to me:
By writing this I may have some chance
To know what ails good Bernard B.

PS.

Shld. Bernard B. to this queer summons
Perchance address a prompt reply:
Direct to "Coffee Room, New Hummums,"[1]
Whither on Wednesday next go I.

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

JULY 18, 1847

DEAR BARTON,

At any other time two letters unanswered charged to my account would amount to a declaration of Bankruptcy. But Elections, like charity (in this respect although in no other), cover a multitude of faults in correspondence. First came the Bury Election. Here I have neither vote nor interest; and one might have thought no business. But one would then have thought wrong. For I am popped on Mr. Bunbury's Committee and sent on embassies. Next comes the West Norfolk Election: and there I am ordered to speak, and lie, and get up at four in the morning and ride about in a butcher's-cart before I had shaved and before I had breakfasted. I was indeed awakened from sleep but not refreshed with wine: for the poisonous black-strap which I had imbibed with the utmost moderation the evening before, while presiding over a hundred yeomen, made me feel like a top, and look like a sere and yellow leaf. Praise be blest! it is all over and I am alive to tell thee. I have been to London, Brighton, Eastbourne, Hastings: been on the Thames and under the Thames: seen a Behemoth (read Job, if you are at a loss) and a wizard: seen a "wilderness of monkies" and, I think, the "old serpent": sat like Sir Roger, on Jacob's Stone, and passed in the course of four hours from the "bosom of a serious family" into the pit of a playhouse. I have not indeed hungered often: but owing to the heat and dust attendant on locomotion in summer, have swallowed a

[1] The New Hummums, an hotel in Covent Garden.

sea of drink, and moreover in this very transitory condition of life, and amid junketings and jauntings manifold I managed to write an article for a Review which the Editor applauds and will print forthwith. Henceforward look on me as no ordinary man.

I shall much like to see you hung in effigy. Your friends should subscribe for lithographs and then I may chance to hang you in my dining-room among such of my ancestors as migrated hither. But ere then, as lithographising will take some time, I hope to see the original. You remember promising to run over this autumn. Schooling has begun again, and save a visit to Grundisburgh, I must stay at home for many weeks to come. I have not been so idle many a day as I have been since the 1st July. Post is urgent and I have another letter to write. So believe me with best remembrances to Miss Barton,

Ever yours
W. B. DONNE

Bernard Barton to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
AUG. 7, 1847

MY DEAR DONNE,

"A certain man drew his bow at a venture," so, or to that effect, says the text, and Ahab found to his cost it reach'd its mark. I send my more harmless missive at quite as great an uncertainty, for though I address it to Bury, I know not but thou art at Bagdad. How should I? Folks frisk about so in this era of Rail-roads that a man's being in Suffolk to-day is no reason why he may not be in the Scilly Isles to-morrow. . . .

I have been desk tethered after my usual wont, but three whole blessed days of this very week I have been more tightly tethered still—for Laurence[1] has been down—slept three nights under my roof, and during the days appertaining to said three nights, I suffered martyrdom by instalments. The mere act of sitting to be studied and limn'd is a sad bore. Then the half darkening of one window, and the entire obscuration of another, an old curtain thrown over the picture over the fire, because the reflected light from it distracted the artist's vision—then the

[1] Samuel Laurence, 1812-1884, portrait painter. Exhibited at the Society of British Artists, 1834-1853; the Royal Academy, 1836-1882.

iterated injunctions to look a little more that way or this—added to the effort to sit and look perfectly at your ease—all these combined make it a sorry business. However we made the best, on the whole, I think, of a bad job.

FitzDennis read Pickwick, Lucy sate in a corner of the room and work'd, and Tom Churchyard every now and then dropt in to observe progress. The result has been a thumping big head in chalks, which FitzDennis thought a very successful performance, Lucy is perfectly satisfied with and Churchyard says is admirable. Of the likeness I consider myself no judge, hardly old or ugly enough I doubt, but I ought to find no fault on this score. With the style and fashion of the execution I am much pleased. The Artist too I was charmed with, modest, quiet, gentlemanly and intelligent. A sad rogue though, for not content with taking off my head and fifteen pound for the job out of poor Lu's little Author fund—he has carried all off with him—but I am to come back mounted, framed and glazed, and then to be hung into the bargain. Barbarous doings! Master Donne. However Lu bears her part with heroism, and she I think has the worst on't.

Thine

B. B.

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

Aug. 30, 1847

1

You thought at Grundisburgh I should be till Monday morn a fixture,
And come and see on Friday or on Saturday your picture;
But Saturday and Friday both they passed away "like winking";
And so it was impossible to do as you were thinking.

2

At houses, such as Mr. G's'.[1] they do not breakfast early,
And if you don't talk politics they think you odd and surly;
So after breakfast and till lunch we talked of "Coke and Hamond"
And how the Norfolk Whigs and Tories one another gammoned.

3

My host indeed on Friday morn, he offered me a pony,
But then, thinks I, I seldom ride, and now the roads are stony,
And if I break the pony's knees, or if my nose I flatten,
I'd better far have kept at Bury, teaching Greek and Latin.

[1] Mr. Brampton Gurdon.

BERNARD BARTON

4

And Saturday, you know, I said must really end my stopping,
And Mrs. G. she said she must on Saturday go shopping;
So off we drove to Ipswich, and went round to all the drapers
And walked so much you might have said we were a pair of trapers.

5

That afternoon I saw the moon ere Mrs. G. departed;
And by that time the Bury trains had all but one off-started
So at ½ past 8 I joined a freight of Christian souls and timber,
And here I am once more at home a doing "Dr. Blimber".

W. B. D.

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

BURY ST. EDMUNDS
SEPTEMBER 30TH/47

DEAR BARTON,

Neither have I been in the hands of the Philistines nor gone astray with, as you account them, the sons of Belial who flocked to Jenny Lind. But like yourself, as my paper indicates, I have been to a funeral, and still regret the loss of a most worthy man and relative.

Not long since my mother who is at Yarmouth greatly cheered me by writing word that you had declared to Mrs. Salmon "you would accept no invitation but mine". I felt proud of the preference, and did not much care for the envy you might thereby have drawn upon me, or for any ill-will you might have personally incurred.

But now you have included me also in the common herd of refusals, I join issue with your other acquaintance in denouncing you as a fraudulent banker, and in wishing your new clerk, the cause of my wrongs, may prove a second Fauntleroy[1] or Sangar. Look to your iron safe.

Roger's robbery was never traced home, and if I can abstract your fine gold and promises to pay, I will spend the one and burn the other.

See you what homage the divine Jenny received at Norwich? The Churches worshipped her with all their bells. The Bishop shed tears of rapture and wiped them off with his apron. So I am not, like Elijah, alone in my devotions, but a true member

[1] Fauntleroy, a fraudulent banker, executed 1824.

of a very populous sect of believers. She comes back to her temple in London next year, and by that time I trust we shall be numerous enough to begin persecuting Quakers, and inhale the delightful odour of a singed broad-brim. I advise you to come and see me ere then, or I shall hand you over to the musical powers. Remember Gardiner protected Roger Ascham, though a stiff Protestant, through all the Marian burnings.

We live in such piping times of peace that Bury fair is proclaimed with no more excitement than attends the crying a stolen goose. Time was when the Mayor, the burgesses, the Recorder, and the Captain of the local Militia, "the treasurers, the councillors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the town were gathered together" to hear the announcement of a Mart where all good housewives purchased their year's sugar and flannel, and where all men of any mark or worship ate sausages and mustard in the market-place, and made resolves, which they kept, to be drunk at least thrice during the statute-month. Now, a dropsical Mayor followed by four scarecrows in blue and yellow liveries, and preceded by a tame lunatic with a bell, informs the four quarters of the town of the opening of the Carnival. The only relics of the past are the yellow breeches of the serving men which typify the mustard, and their oblong and shaking noses emblematic of sausages.

I have long acted on your beatitude—

"Blessed are they who expect nothing, for they shall not be disappointed". It is so good a maxim, that I wonder it was not uttered 1817 years ago. Nevertheless, though I expect him not, I shall be right glad to see your "Cottager" [E. FG.].

Remember me to Miss Barton and believe me,

Ever yours truly
WILLIAM B. DONNE

Bernard Barton to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
OCTOBER 7, 1847

DEAR DONNE,

. . . Still harping on that Lindean Wench! So is old Crabbe, who saw and heard her at Norwich, and for aught

I know, will carry her image enshrin'd in his heart with him to the Grave, if it be not quenched in those clouds of smoke he emits every night. He does not speak well of her looks tho', but says she looks a poor, pale, attenuated Ghost of a Girl, and who can wonder? Such hours, such a life, in such an unhealthy and unnatural atmosphere! Well, her blood, or the lack of it in her cheeks, rests not on my head. "She cannot shake her silky curls at me, and say, 'Thou did'st it!'" But as old Adam Woodcock, Falconer to the Knight of Avenel, said, "Tace is Latin for a Candle," so I upbraid no one, —perhaps the Bishop's tears might not be of rapture *only!* Has a squib somewhat after this fashion fallen in thy way? I only heard it once at S— the other evening, so very likely I misquote it, and may mar its point, if it have any—

> 'Tis a truth Ornithologists long have confest,
> That the Cuckoo will fly to the Hedge-sparrow's nest,
> But the Bishop of Norwich has taught us to know,
> That the Nightingale visits the nest of the Crow.[1]

Notwithstanding my quotation, however, I honour the old Bishop for being the poor Girl's host. I only wish he could keep her there quietly and snugly with his daughters thro' the winter, out of the glare of gas-lights, the heat of crowded rooms, and the clapping of deaf Dukes and Dowagers, bring her out as fresh as a cowslip in the spring and marry her to her Lutheran Lover. She might then go and sing Cradle Songs to her Childer in Fatherland, and be a happy and long-lived wife and mother. Would not this be a more enjoyable life than the poor Girl has of late had? Marry! I think it would—but I am a Goth and Vandal, an ear-less Quaker.

Thine, however

B. B.

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

BURY ST. EDMUNDS
NOVEMBER 3RD, 1847

DEAR BARTON,

When one has nothing particular to say, it is a part of wisdom to forbear writing. I am in that predicament:

[1] Edward Stanley, Bishop of Norwich, went by the nickname of "Jem Crow".

and not only so—but have lately been much occupied with usiness. Know you by these presents that until st I have been as good as Steward of five manors for ve years. But the Lord of the Manors is lately new Pharaoh has come who knows not Joseph—and nger Steward. I view my abdication with unmixed s ction, as the office brought me much trouble and the profits went to another [Mr. Hewitt].

Moreover my expulsion may indirectly tend to prolongation of my days, since now I shall travel seldomer by the Eastern Counties Railway, and therefore shall have fewer chances of being squashed. I do not see that improvement in Science and Political economy has aught to do with the present monetary crisis. More people than formerly are engaged in trade, and consequently there is more emulation and more risk. Besides political economy does not, as far as I am aware, in any of its theories inculcate gambling, and gambling is the cause of the distress. Therefore, in Lord John's place, I would not, unless with sanction of Parliament, have loosened a single screw in the Banking Machine. What good has it done this indulgence to the desperate? The Funds rise for a few hours and drop again. Political economy professes the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Now competence not opulence, is the way to be happy—whereas all in the present mess have been striving to be rich, and many of them are rightfully smarting for their exorbitance. I am no believer in good old times—they had their faults and follies and we ours. I had as lief be in the Gazette as tied to a tar-barrel for heresy, or pining in a dungeon till I bought my freedom with gold.

I quite despair of seeing you this year, since you speak of being glued to the desk till the spring. How does the new Clerk prove? Thank your stars that you have not me in his place. I am anything but a ready reckoner, and have no skill in Compound and Simple Interest. I could never learn at school the mysteries of Barter and Tare and Tret, but covenanted with more calculating boys to do their verses and translations, so they would work my sums. The bargain was probably for the ultimate disadvantage of both parties. They cannot,

if they are alive, construe Homer, and I this very night have signally failed in working a sum in the Golden Rule. This being the ninth letter I have written to-night must now close. The same post takes one from me to the "Cottage" or I would add my remembrances.

Ever yours
WILLIAM B. DONNE

Bernard Barton to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
NOVEMBER 5, 1847

DEAR DONNE,

I won't argue with thee about improvement in Science and Political Economy having got us into our present dolorous dibbles, because the very phrase seems to me to imply a contradiction. Improvement of any sort should never make things worse, unless it were in Ireland where results naturally go by contraries.

I know lamentably little of Science, less than nothing, if that be possible, about Political Economy, but it does seem queer to me, in this March of Intellect Age, that the more we fancy we know, the more hopelessly we flounder in all sorts of dilemmas and difficulties. As to the "greatest happiness principle to the greatest number," it has a pretty sound with it, and glides trippingly off the tongue, but I never could, for the life of me, see it intelligibly explained. I think it was Bentham who first broach'd this theory and Bentham I always was too stupid to understand. . . .

Thine ever affectionately
B. B.

Bernard Barton to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
NOVEMBER 20, 1847

DEAR DONNE,

I heard the other day of the critical state of thy good wife's mother (Hewitt I think by name). Cowper has given me a sort of interest in all bearing the names of Donne, Hewitt or Balls. I opine these were the trio of names of which

I retain a cordial memory as connected with Him. The Donnes I have long learnt to love for their own sakes. The Hewitts and Balls I feel an interest in as ramifications of that genealogical tree. Edward told me thou wast off into Norfolk to see Mrs. Hewitt. By this thou mayst probably have gotten into thy Den again. Anyhow I feel inclined to hasard a line or two of inquiry about thy Patient and thyself, feeling solicitude enough about both to warrant me in doing so.

Edward [FG.] slept here last night, and left us for Ipswich this morning. He returns from thence I think on Monday, as his Father is expected next week to stop a fortnight at Boulge, such at least is the talk. I send thee a scrap of my verse which I forwarded to the "Ipswich Express" last week anonymously, but the publisher, as a polite way of letting me know he was aware of its paternity, struck off a dozen copies, while it was in type, and sent them to me in an envelope without note or comment. I know not how they may suit thy taste. I have not shown them either to Lucy or Edward (FitzGerald) as I knew they never saw the Paper—so they are as yet uncriticised.

Thine truly

B. B.

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

Nov. 23, 1847

DEAR BARTON,

Mrs. Hewitt died *seven and twenty years* ago last September. She was *Johnny of Norfolk's* sister and is herself celebrated in Cowper's letters. I have a nice portrait of her by Abbot, which you may see for coming hither.

Your informant was not however utterly wrong, *i.e.*, he was right in the name and in the connexion to myself; but wrong in the sex. I went last week into Norfolk to attend *Mr.* Hewitt's last hours: and I go thither to bury him on Saturday next. He had long been a grievous sufferer from stone and ossification of the heart. Either disease commonly despatches most men without waiting for their 76th year, but poor Mr. Hewitt was almost a giant in build and constitution, and so his sufferings, and very grievous they were, and withal most patiently endured,

MRS. HEWITT (CATHARINE JOHNSON)

Mary

lasted for more than fourteen years. He survived his intellect also, and his death is in all respects a release from tribulation.

I cannot therefore mourn his departure: yet I am not untouched by his death. The last link with my dear wife's name and family is now broken,[1] and I perhaps felt the more attached to him, from my being the only relative who for many years saw anything of him. He had been unprosperous, and so the herd swept by him.

I like thy lines well and thank you for sending me a copy. You must be content however with this correction of your genealogical error, and take a short note, as I have several to indite by this day's post.

With best remembrances to Miss Barton,

Evers yours most truly

WILLIAM B. DONNE

Bernard Barton to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
DECEMBER 2, 1847

MY DEAR DONNE,

By this I take it thou hast returned from doing the last kind and mournful offices to poor Mr. Hewitt. I have seldom read an obituary so touching though brief, and can perfectly enter into the feelings which directed it.

Lu has been occupied for days in a task almost as Herculean as clearing out an Augean stable, routing over boxes of letters accumulated from indolence and forgetfulness during about a quarter of a century. I would not have taken the job in hand for a king's ransom. I remember Scott in his "Gurnal" says after only one morning spent after a like fashion that he never before so felt and understood the concatenation between Ahitophel setting his house in order, and then straightway going and hanging himself. I have no fear of Lu doing so, for few of the letters materially concern her, nor could she even attempt to read them; a glance at the signature was all she

[1] Mr. Hewitt was father-in-law to W. B. Donne, and a lawyer by profession. He married his cousin Catharine Johnson, the sister of Cowper's "Johnny of Norfolk".

could have time to give, prior to consigning them to the pile for burning, or the lesser one to lay by for consideration. . . . .

Thine ever

B. B.

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

1847

MY DEAR BARTON,

I have written so many letters since my return on Saturday that I am bankrupt in black-edged paper. Nor can I remedy the deficiency without going out of the door. This the weather and natural laziness forbid; but as Quakers never put on mourning, the want of a sable border may serve as a mark of respect to—yourself. I can quite sympathise with Miss Barton in her literary Auto da Fè, seeing I must have been engaged in a similar task at or about the same time. The desk and boxes, to say nothing of the closets, of a deceased lawyer may contain perilous secrets; and therefore I deemed it fitting to review all Mr. Hewitt's papers before leaving Mattishall. It was literally an "*Augean*" labour. For many parcels had been undisturbed since they were red-taped and docketed in 1799. The red-tape had become dim, and the dust and worms had coated the packets with a thick brown encrustation.

It is, I fancy, a common saying that every one must, ere he dies, eat a peck of dirt. Would that all my duties in this life had been as certainly fulfilled! For, if not earlier, on Monday in last week I assuredly swallowed my full allowance, and I incline to think it was a Benjamin's mess. Poor Mrs. Bodham entailed on me a similar task; and there were some of her letters which, in ceremonious diction between near and dear friends, resemble the letters you describe. Perhaps as times advance *our* correspondence will grow as obsolete; and your executor's grandchildren, if you are so much my enemy as to keep a scrap of my writing, will one revision-day set me down for a formal old prig. I remember making two laughable discoveries among good and great Aunt's papers. She was the most charitable women, or men either (if I may venture such a phrase) and pocket had been repeatedly picked, would never think

any one a rogue. But she was executor to a pious rascal named Rudd, and was, I believe, let in by him to the tune of £50. Rudd's executorial accounts are labelled by her thus, "*Rudd's affairs*"—*mem.* "*Rudd, great rogue*".[1] In an old pocket-book of 1754, I found in Mrs. B.'s *mother's* handwriting the following memorandum, "Aug. 7th, nearly choked by a piece of veal—such are thy mercies, Lord, to me a sinner".

We have a wizard and sundry Devils next door[2] [*i.e.*, the theatre], and I and my posterity are going to be bewitched to-day. I hope we shall fare better than Saul at Endor. Yet we may in some measure without bad results fare alike. For whereas the witch of yore made the King eat and drink, so our wizard is a hospitable one and converts horsebeans in a moment into hot coffee, and hands it round to the audience. Marry, except in the suddenness of the transmutation, no witch or wizard is needed for this feat, as horsebeans are ordinarily much used for the same end by grocers.

With best remembrances to Miss Barton,

Ever yours truly
WILLIAM DONNE

DECEMBER 7TH, 1847
BURY ST. EDMUNDS

Love to E. FG.

J. M. Kemble to W. B. Donne

COMMON WOOD
RICKMANSWORTH, HERTS
20/12/47

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

First let me ask what you are all about: what you are yourself doing beyond the dull but respectable employment of pedagoguing your boys for their prig of a pedagogue at the school: how they get on, etc. I meant to have run over to ask all these questions "vivâ voce," but my presence at

[1] The "Rogue Rudd" was always trying to borrow money from the Donnes. On one occasion he sent a messenger to say that unless he could have a certain sum at once, he should hang himself on one of the trees in Mattishall garden. Mr. Edward Donne replied, "Give my compliments to Mr. Rudd, and tell him that any tree in the garden is at his disposal".

[2] Mr. Donne's house was next to the theatre.

Cambridge was imperatively necessary. Then I have been at Cheltenham for two months. Nothing can be more attractive than the valley of the Severn, for your genuine historian, especially if he be but a lover of nature, or have an eye for the beautiful; and without both, a poor historian he will be. The Welsh Mountains, the last and impregnable fortresses of a race to which one must give the praise of a determined patriotism, are before him. The great river to which Glevum and Uriconium owed their importance lies at his feet.

A little imagination will restore the numberless villas whose ruins turned up from time to time by the plough, attest the predilection of the Romans for this delicious site. If you idly stoop to pick up a tile—behold it is Samian pottery or strong hard bond tile; a coloured stone attracts you?—It is a portion of Roman Glass. You think some peasant has dropped a halfpenny? May be so, but the peasant died nearly two thousand years ago, and the halfpenny is a denarius of the Cæsars. Along the hills on which you stand, every bluff is an ancient fortress; here time out of mind, have been the lines of defence of inland nations against their more western neighbours; every hill is crowned with earthworks; rude, massive and irregular as the Britons made them; more skilfully placed and better built when Roman soldiers erected them; used in turn, though not constructed, by the Saxon, whose remains are sometimes found to mark *his* occupation; while over all frowns the tumulus of a restless Viking overlooking even in death the plains he devastated and plundered.

I could go on and expatiate on this subject for sheets together if I were not sure that my gazette would end by wearing out even your patience, so I will only add that I returned to Common Wood, much better in heart and head and stomach—which alas! has so much to do with both—with a pocket-book full of memoranda, and a sketch-book full of churches, forts, piscinas, sedilia, arches, and what not?

. . . . . .

Yr. affect. friend
J. M. Kemble

Bernard Barton to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
DECEMBER 21, 1847

DEAR DONNE,

I want thy frank and honest opinion and advice touching a project I have meditated, on and off, for some few years past. N.B.—I have no thoughts of marrying, tho' this sort of introduction looks like it. But I have some thoughts of setting about a new work, in an entirely new line of Authorship —for me. Recollections of my Life and Times, with sketches and portraits of divers and sundry folks who have fallen in my way, or with whom I have in one way or another held intercourse, interspersed with a sort of running commentary on some of the events which have transpired during the thirty or forty years which have elapsed since I reach'd manhood.

It strikes me that a very amusing and gossiping sort of book might be produced by any man pretty well acquainted with the general literature of the last thirty years, not of the most profound or learned character, with a sort of running vein of autobiographic souvenirs. Few persons in humble and comparatively obscure life, buried alive in a little provincial Town for above forty years, have been thrown in the way of greater varieties of character, or mixed with the middle grades of Society more perhaps, than I have done; or have held at different periods more widely differing opinions. So that I think I am about as free from narrow or sectarian prejudices, and contracted sympathies as most. The actual incidents of my life, to be sure, have been very few, but I have read, and thought and observed what has been going on around me, tolerably, for a desk-bound wight, and I fancy I could put together a pretty readable record. One thing I must premise, it will be a work of no pretence either as to style or arrangement, plan or method. It must be written by fits and starts, as, when, and how my scant intervals of leisure may allow. So it must needs be, in degree, a thing of shreds and patches, the "disjuncta membra" of an Autobiography, rather than a complete and finished specimen of its class. But I think it might be rendered amusing, interesting, and perhaps not uninstructive. Of course this hasty and

imperfect description of what I contemplate can give thee no clear or definite idea of what the work might turn out, but I may have said enough to give thee a notion of the plan and project glimmering before me. Let me have thy honest sentiments as to its feasibility, and regard it as only thought, on paper, for thy judgment.

Thine ever truly

B. B.

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

DECEMBER 24, 47
BURY ST. EDMUNDS

DEAR BARTON,

I believe that every man who has had much intercourse either of business, correspondence, or converse with his fellowmen, may write an instructive and interesting book of his own experiences and reminiscences, provided always he keeps aloof from the idea of bookmaking, and tells his story honestly, genially, and pointedly. If our fireside chat could be taken down as freshly and simply as we utter it, it would often be more eloquent and wiser than tomes of studied prose. The men of the 17th century wrote memoirs in this spirit, and without fear of reviewers. They wrote because a thought was in their hearts, and not because they wanted the world to say "Quam belli"! Hence Baxter, Bunyan, Pepys and Mrs. Hutchinson delight us still, and still delight thousands to be born after we are past reading. Moreover every man should have a record of himself in hand even if it be only for himself. It is marvellous how much one may hive of wisdom and wit by booking from time to time stray thoughts and casual anecdotes. Goethe said that he read books not so much for what they told him as for what they reflected of the character of their respective authors, and this which is true of works on general subjects, is especially true of Memoirs. It is their business to be the abstract and brief chronicle of their authors' *self*, and thus to furnish pictures in little of the Macrocosm of men generically. What is more charming than an autobiography like Madame Roland's, where events are viewed through the medium of a second pair of eyes, or, conversely, more intolerable than the greater number of

religious Biographies wherein Mr. A.'s experience is tortured into resemblance with Mr. B.'s, A. and B. being all the while as unlike in their mental constitutions as the Knight and Castle moves are to each other on the Chess Board?

Wherefore for these reasons, all and sundry, I counsel you strenuously to think no more of your project, but forthwith to put it into act. Only write your thoughts and stories as well as you tell them, and I will answer for your book being welcome and pleasant.

. . . . . .

Ever yrs. truly
W. B. DONNE

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

JAN. 3, 1848

MY DEAR FRIEND,

That my good wishes may not turn sour with keeping, I write an immediate reply to your kind letter just received. Thereby I shall avoid any general reproach from my own conscience, but also all special rebukes from you, such as I have had ere now for tardy epistolation.

You have doubtless heard of the wondrous virtues of chloroform. I have not another tooth to lose, neither have I perilled my life again by inhalation. But I am not now to speak of my own adventures but of a judgment which has befallen the Doctors themselves.

Last week six or seven of what the Indians call "great Medecines" gathered round the bed of a poor fellow in the Bury Hospital with the purpose of mangling him. The Operator had his apron on and his sleeves tucked up. The Nurse approached with a bottle of chloroform, and the "depity sawbones," as Sam Weller calls the apprentices, awaited a lesson. The Nurse stumbled and fell. The bottle broke. The "great Medecines" were prostrated by the somniferous vapour, and lay, some on each other, some on the Nurse, some on the patient, insensible for many minutes.

. . . . . .

Ever yrs.
W. B. DONNE

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

JAN. 21, 1848

MY DEAR BARTON,

Though I am particularly busy to-day, I cannot resist your kind wish to hear speedily of my dear little girl. She is, thank God, much better and can walk across the room with little or no aid.

The pastime of Crocodile is certainly not original.[1] Boccaccio tells a story closely resembling it, and you have found it sculptured on wood. Doubtless the "Canon" was a learned clerk and was realizing what he had read. So perhaps after all he was no such ill judge of heresy and orthodoxy.

When I was a young man I was noted for eschewing Balls, and seldom exhibited my agility in the dance. But now that my hair grizzles, and my eyes need barnacles, I am fallen upon galliards and brawls. On Wednesday I was at a party of 150, and to-night I am going to another such junketing. But so Plutarch records of Theseus that in his youth he was grave and laborious, ridding the earth of monsters and doing other praiseworthy deeds; but in his old age he occupied himself with abductions and adulteries, insomuch that Plutarch doubts whether his history has not been inverted and the later end of his life related before the beginning. And perhaps *when* my life is written, my biographer will be perplexed by this inconsistency and write, "I cannot well make this man out. In his early manhood he loved his books, his elbow-chair and his pipe, but as he grew older he much consorted with publicans and sinners."

Should you be living when my life is writing let the "able editor" have this note and if he has any gratitude in him, he will send you a copy of his book.

With kind regards to Miss Barton,

Ever yrs. truly
WM. B. DONNE

JAN. 21
BURY ST. EDMUNDS

[1] This refers to a story of a certain Dr. H. who, in "advanced age, married a young wife. Her gossips were condoling with her after the marriage on the long dull evenings she must spend with her old man. She said, 'Oh! they are not dull at all—we play at Crocodile'. 'Crocodile, my dear, what's that?' 'Why, after dinner Dr. H. goes on all fours round and round the room, and I ride on his back.'" I quote this from a letter of W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton, 15th January, 1848.—ED.

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

BURY ST. EDMUNDS
APRIL 13TH, 1848

Is E. FG. at Boulge?

MY DEAR BARTON,

I am in debt to you a letter which I deferred paying *before* I went to London that I might have some news to tell you, and now I am come back as wise as I went.

If you want to see London thoroughly, take with you a boy or other person who has never seen it before. By lionising my children I am become wondrous wise myself. The Thames Tunnel which I saw last Dog-days might have fallen in ere tempting me alone to visit it, and Madame Tussaud's wax humanities might have glared till Doomsday. I know now the physiognomy of all the remarkable murderers from Henry VIII. to Courvoisier, and I cannot help thinking it rather an encouragement to break the sixth commandment, that, by so doing, you ensure crowds of admirers in Baker Street, Portman Square [now Marylebone Road]. It may not be true fame, but it is fame, and fame has odd caprices, since it makes people give sixpence extra to see among other things equally curious a pocket-handkerchief used by Napoleon when his nose bled.

We have just started an Archæological Society in Bury, but I suspect there are very few antiquaries among us. At least already some dismay is legible in the countenances of members at the prospect of having to read papers on the forgotten things of this town and neighbourhood. I have some idea of cribbing Monkbarns' essay on his Prætorium and applying it to an old mound near my house. It could not be more inappropriate than was Capt. Manby's gift to the Norwich archæologists at their first meeting. The vain old man sent them models of his life-preserver which, as it related to the living and not to the departed, was as unarchæological a present as could be devised. Had he fished up a few skeletons of Danish rovers from the Suffolk coast, or the sword of Brian Boroome out of the Waveney, however ugly the things might have been, they would have handed his name down to posterity. For you must know that in general the less useful anything is, the more it is

prized by archæologists. However such societies have their
y save the historian much dirty work, and they afford
r dining together now and then.
seen a good deal of late of a worthy neighbour of
Hinds Groome, of Earl Soham.[1] Under a somewhat
rior he has a great deal of knowledge and fun. We
alk in perfection a dialect not much in use in the
upper es, *viz.*, broad Norfolk, *i.e.*, we not merely use the words but we think the thoughts of the "pisantry". It would do you good to hear us hold imaginary conversations. I am coming to see him in the summer and seem establishing acquaintance in your neighbourhood.

Ever yours truly
WM. B. DONNE

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

MAY 17, 1848

MY DEAR BARTON,

Jenny has come again and has brought all this fine weather. Yet I have not been to hear her yet! My abstinence is not the result of indifference but of "dreadful destitution". I cannot afford the journey and its contingencies. Could you not raise a small subscription for me as "*a living relative of the poet Cowper in distress*"? You have at Woodbridge artists and literary men who must feel for me. I would go cheap, sleeping in the dry arches of Waterloo bridge and spunging on my friends. A soup-plate full of pence might suffice. It is very mortifying to me to see what sums they gathered here on Sunday and Monday for the "Conversion of the Jews," and not a farthing of it coming to myself. Am I not better than many Jews? When next you dress yourself "put on," among other raiment, "bowels of compassion".

Have you seen a cordial kindly life of Goldsmith by John Forster? It is well worth the marking, and brings out "poor Goldy's" true character, which his contemporaries misunderstood and bequeathed their mistake to others. I always loved Goldsmith better than any of his set, and not only for his "Vicar"

[1] Brother of FitzGerald's friend the Archdeacon of Suffolk.

and his "Village," etc., but for his Natural History. He writes like the Animal's friend.

FitzGerald did manifest his existence in the way you supposed, *viz.*, by walking into the room. Why cannot you afford me a similar proof that you are something more than a name? It would be much better to come here than to catch cold on Aldborough cliffs.

Ever yrs.
WILLIAM B. DONNE

BURY ST. EDMUNDS
MAY 17TH, 1848

Bernard Barton to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
MAY 18, 1848

DEAR DONNE,

Glad was I once more to see thy well-known hand, it gives me an excuse to write to thee, which thy constant reports of the overwhelming pressure of thy multifarious occupations make one afraid to venture on, unauthorized. I send thee herewith No. four of my printed, not published, trifles, in the form of a little Memorial of my good old friend Major Moor. Thou didst not know the man or thou wouldst be more likely to tolerate my tribute to his memory than I dare now hope for. The last Page is by thy new friend Groome, and the last few lines of it the Major might have "walked" for.

I have just had a visit from my Gentleman Brother out of Hampshire. He ran on in a very laudatory style touching a late Article in the "Edinburgh" on Plato! which I think I have heard Edward FitzGerald fix on thee. How canst thou, my dear fellow, reconcile it to thy conscience to be an "Edinburgh" Reviewer and never to have given me an Article therein? Hast thou not my incomparable Volume of "Household Verses"—and besides them four slender Sheetlings or half Sheetlings—under the titles of "Sea-weeds"—"New-Year offering to the Queen"—"Birth-day Verses"—and the "More Majorum" I now transmit—all the latter un-sunn'd Pleasures of which the world knows no more than of the lost Books of the Sybil? I am only surprised thou canst sleep o' nights with such a debt unpaid!

But I spare thee. I really would come to Bury if I could, but I can't get out. Of late, my bellows seem getting out of repair. I puff and pant like an Otter, and often feel as if in the words of the old Sea Song

Both chain pumps were choked below.

Unluckily I belong not to a rhyming fraternity, or I might ere this have been set desk-free. Our Friends are reputed a rich Sect, and they are a liberal one in their way. *To the distrest* Irish they gave thousands, to the Negro Cause—ditto! "*Am I not a Man and a Brother?*" But I can neither sue them "in formâ pauperis," or even drop a hint that I stand a fair chance of falling from my perch and dying in clerkly harness. This growl and grumble is only for thy private ear to open the valve an inch that I may get breath!

Thine B.

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

MAY 26, 1848

MY DEAR BARTON,

Many thanks for your letter and its welcome inclosure, which I like very much as a cordial graphic picture of a good man whom I could well wish to have known. Put out of your head immediately all unnecessary scruples about writing to me. I may not be very punctual in answering—it never was a grace vouchsafed me so to be. But I am always glad to see your handwriting, and albeit busy, am not half so hard wrought as yourself. I am very sorry you speak ill of your bellows and of your basis—one comes of leaning and the other of sitting too much. I shall bring an action against Alexander & Co. for depriving me of your company, and, as damages must be awarded, will pay them to you.

I did *not* write the article on Plato in the last Edinburgh, so Mr. Barton's praises must go further to find an owner. As to putting you or any one else into the Review, I have as much power to do it, as to order you at sight to pay me £20 having no assets at the time. I am, as regards Reviewing, a man under authority, and when Empson says do this, I do it. Moreover "in this crash of nations and this fall of thrones," I doubt, even

if I criticised you, whether the still small voice of poetry would be hearkened to.

I have sent the Picture of Cowper's Mother to be cleaned and repaired in London, and Laurence is kind enough to superintend its refreshment. So that I expect when it comes back to have a magnet which will draw you to Bury, even though a Ledger is chained to each leg, and your high stool is where "Corisca's ladle" was.

I have just written a work which will last a century and *may* probably much longer. It is to be engraven on marble and imbedded in granite. A fig for such writers as you who use only ink and paper! That the thought of my immortality may not perplex you too much and cause errors in summation, I add that it is an Inscription for the late L^d^. Leicester's monument, and it will brave the winds and the rain in Holkham Park.

Now I must set to work on a life of Terence, so farewell and wish me well through it, as it is not very interesting and rather meagre and fabulous as respects the materials.

Ever yours most truly
WILLIAM BODHAM DONNE

BURY ST. EDMUNDS
MAY 26TH, 1848

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

BURY ST. EDMUNDS
JULY 18TH, 1848

MY DEAR BARTON,

Absence from home has prevented me from answering your last letter and thanking you for the poem it contained. I have been traversing the county of Norfolk from Dan to Beersheba, and strange to say have been in a part of it previously unknown to me, tramper as I am or rather have been in days of yore. Did you ever hear of a place yclept Castle Rising, about four miles north-east of Lynn? There is an old Castle and Barony belonging to the Howards, who, though they were disfranchised by the Reform Bill, still exercise a most perfect despotism in their territories. Their power is mostly shown in doing good. The cottages are pictures and the farmers are all fat. Howbeit all unruly subjects are summarily dismissed, even young ladies

who meet with "misfortunes" are not allowed to remain in this Goshen. I wish England, were or rather could be, half as well governed as the demesnes of Mrs. Frances Howard. It would have done you good to see from the Castle-top, as I did, the sun sink into the sea, and the moon rise full faced over the green level of wood and meadow eastward. Marry! besides feeding our eyes we fed our bodies; the Agent for the estate was my host, and collected from the tenants such a quit rent of barn-door fowls, raspberries and cream and other pastoral dainties as will make me for ever after venerate copyhold tenure and despotic government. Moreover we had a pail full of water from the old Castle well, as clear as crystal; but do not therefore fancy that we drank like beasts the pure element out of the pail, on the contrary it contained something out of the Lady of the Manor's cellar which, combined with real Havannahs, smuggled of course, rendered us all supremely comfortable.

Attached to the Hall is a college for old women! They do not, like other dames at Cambridge and Oxford, wrangle for their fellowships, or, that I know of, read deep in Homer or Euclid. But probation is necessary. They must be sixty years of age and virtuous; and if they are both, all worldly cares are taken from them, and they wear high crowned hats and blue gowns, and scarlet cloaks, and may perhaps ride on broom-sticks, for their costume suggests the idea.

. . . . . .

[Here follow some sketches of costumes.]

I was in jest when I surmised you might be affronted. What I said was "I had now and then corrected your verses, and I remembered how it fared with Gil Blas and the Bishop of Grenada in the matter of the homilies".

Had you an awful storm on Friday night? Here a farm house and premises were burnt down, and roast pig[1] was produced to an extent that might draw Elia from his grave. With best remembrances to Miss Barton.

Ever yrs. truly
Wm. B. Donne

[1] "Dissertation on Roast Pig" by Elia.

Bernard Barton to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
JULY 22, 1848

DEAR DONNE,

Many thanks for thy most pleasant epistle and its market—no—Castle Rising recollections. Faith, it would have been a high treat to me to have *risen* to such altitudes, as that old Castle top, and still more should I have enjoyed the festivities thereafter; I should have fancied myself a *rising* character, which I have now long despaired of realising. But nothing is perfect, not even a Castle Rising Symposium. Those cigars would have soon laid me prostrate. They would have drown'd the finer aroma of "mon tabac". Your thorough going smoker "robs me of that which doth not enrich him, but leaves me poor indeed". I never could understand the beatitude of a man's filling his mouth with smoke, and then puffing it out again for the beatification of the eyes, noses and other organs of all round him, but there may be a mystical glorification in the process, hidden from me. I suppose there is. Thy sketch of the Bedes-woman of Castle-Rising and thy own Cranium, so crown'd, are both capital. Pray use all thy interest with thy quondam Host, the agent of good Mrs. Frances Howard, to found and endow a similar College for old men above 60 and nominate me as first Provost. I should like mightily to have all worldly cares taken from me, and lead a life of blessed idleness, bating my poetical avocations. His agent-ship may tell Mrs. Frances Howard that I will be her Laureate into the bargain, and indite for her a ditty annually, half yearly, or quarterly, whichever she may prefer. . . . Moxon has just sent me two slender tomes, the "Final Remains of Charles Lamb". I have only had 'em an hour or two, and have not yet cut 'em open, but in dipping in here and there I met with rather a rich anecdote. A rather precise Lady of Lamb's acquaintance, lent him, when it first came out, "*Cœlebs in search of a Wife*". I can hardly fancy a book less likely to take Lamb's fancy. It was very soon returned with the following stanza, to the best of my recollection, written by Lamb in the first leaf:—

If I were to search out a wife,
I'd marry the Landlord's daughter;
For then I might sit in the bar
And drink cold brandy and water.

precise lady's total surprise at such a commentary I send thee another poem of mine, or Homily t much unlike the Archbishop's after his fit, and cy I see thee arching thy eyebrows, and dropping thy neither jaw over. I sent one to a lady the other day, and her husband met me last evening and asked me gravely if there was anything personal in it!!!

Thine truly
B. B.

Bernard Barton to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
AUGUST 7, 1848

DEAR DONNE,

I have a letter to-night from your secretary Tymms, requesting of me an impression of that queer old Seal I once, if I mistake not, applied to thee for an explanation of. Lord Northampton had it engraved for the Archæological Journal, with a statement of where it was found (Stoke by Clare) and its supposed device. Tymms says your Society are to hold the next meeting of your local institute at Clare, and perhaps he may fancy the impress may be more easily deciphered at or near the spot of its disinterment. I don't see much in the hypothesis, should he hold such an one, but I have sealed my response to his application with a very fair impress of said Seal, and send it by this night's post, though the odds are that the postmaster here or at Bury may sorely mar both device, and legend, or motto, in stamping the Letter, maugre my modest hint on the outside deprecatory of any such violent proceedings. Should it be demolished, and your learned Society still be desirous of possessing and preserving so invaluable a relique, we must hit on some safer mode of transmission.

I think I told thee of this second publication about poor Lamb, but I think I did not tell thee of an Epitaph, recorded in it, he pretends to have discovered in some suburban Church-

yard, to the memory of an infant aged 4 months with this text subjoined below :—

"Honour thy Father and Mother that thy days may be long in the Land!!"

I daresay the thing is a pure invention of Lamb's, who delighted in mystifying his correspondents. But the inapposite-ness of the quotation is no disproval of the fact. In the burying ground of the Baptist Meeting House of Grundisburgh I remember years ago reading the following :—

TO THE MEMORY OF CHARLOTTE, WIFE OF BENJAMIN LOUSY

O may I stand before the Lamb,
When seas and skies are fled;
And hear the judge pronounce my name,
With blessings on my head!

Fare thee well—and let me soon have proof under thy hand and seal that I have not out-sinned forgiveness in the matter of Ichabod!

Thine ever
B. B.

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

Aug. 11, 1848

My dear Barton,

Your precious balms have not broken my head, though, had they done so, it would have served me right for not acknowledging "Ichabod," and no great harm either, for a better head might easily be found. But the fact is that when Ichabod arrived *I* was *departed*, and since my return I have had a house full of ladies, and as the said ladies draw and ramble after old abbies, tombstones, carvings, pots, etc., I have had work enough on my hands to find them in antiquities, and have been active Secretary to a female archæological society.

I have seen Tymms only once for several weeks and that once was at a Meeting of the Trustees of the Savings Bank to deliberate upon the best means of draining the said Bank and the Norman Tower. As the plan involves opening a very ancient common sewer, coeval with the Monastery, I proposed that whatever was found in the sewer should belong to the Bury Archæological Society. I have been reading with great in-

terest the "Final Memorials of Charles Lamb". One rises from the volumes with increased veneration for Lamb. His trials were sharper than many of the Martyrs of the modern evangelical church passed through. Martyrs who eat 365 good dinners in the year and had always at hand a plentiful supply of flatterers to smooth their thorns—and, in my mind, excuse his brandy and water peccadilloes. But yet my mind revolts from the book as an improper uplifting of the family curtain. Why should all the world be told of the dreadful tragedy of the Lamb household? If it *were* published in some magazine—whose editor should have been pilloried—how does that justify Mr. Serjeant Talfourd, Lamb's authentic biographer, for giving the story still wider circulation. Few would read it in a monthly or quarterly journal—whereas all the circulating libraries will now have it, and the increasing sect of Lamb's admirers will henceforward associate the tale with their memories of the author. It will go to America and Australia, for whither do not Lamb's works now go? Out on such needless revelations! Neither in truth nor fiction have I met with so moving a glimpse of humanity as that of Lamb and his sister on their road to Hoxton Madhouse, weeping, walking slowly side by side. It transcends inasmuch as there was such near kinship in the sufferers, Cowper's months of silence in Mr. Newton's parlour at Olney, with that rugged Calvinist and "Mary" tending him.

I much fear that I cannot after all come this month to Grundisburgh. School reopens on Wednesday next, and then I am a fixture, and B. G. [Brampton Gurdon] migrates into Norfolk in September. Moreover I have been idle lately and my work is closing round me, like those leaden chambers at Venice that daily drew closelier round their captives.

Did I ever tell you an epitaph on three children who died of ague, in a churchyard near Waxham in Norfolk:—

> Here lie our little children three
> Which God Almighty guv to we;
> They all three died of ague-fits,
> And here they lie as dead as nits.

Some one completed the inscription with—

> Cheer up my lads! for in a trice
> These little *nits* will turn to *lice*.

This is a new form of expressing "the sure and certain hope" of ordinary tombstones, and a novel comment on the text that we shall all be changed in the twinkling of an eye!

One more epitaph in Dereham churchyard:—

> Here lieth Martin Enmerod,
> Have mercy on his soul, Lord God:
> As he would have, if he were God,
> And thou wert Martin Enmerod.[1]

Ever yrs. truly
W. B. DONNE

Bernard Barton to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
SEPT. 12, 1848

DEAR DONNE,

Dost thou not remember the elegant compliment paid by a Frenchman to an Englishman—"It must be acknowledged that Monsieur has a grand talent for silence!" I thought the report I had sent thee of my name proving a reputed passport to a "Hireling Priest" would have made thee write instanter, hadst thou even been having another tooth extracted. Why the fabulous tales of Orpheus, and the marvels wrought by his Lyre fall far short of this, and thou hearest or readest the tidings as an ordinary occurrence of every-day life. But thou art in such request at Bury, and so petted and fondled and dandled by the Magnates there, that we poor East Anglians are thrown into shade. My friend Corrance tells me he toiled as men labour after virtue, to get introduced to thee, and did obtain an audience, from thence he came "ravished with thy converse," but to meet thee for a longer colloquy at dinner was utterly impossible. Well, my dear fellow, I grudge thee not thy honours, for they are well won by thy deserts, only bear in mind

[1] The original runs thus:—

> "Here lyeth Ahleke Pott
> Have pity on me Lord God
> As I wd. have pity on thee
> Wert thou Ahleke Pott
> And I, Lord God."

Travels through Germany, published in 1768, by Thom. Nugent, LL.D., Fellow of Society of Antiquaries.

the woe denounced against those of whom all men speak well, and do not incur it, if thou can'st well help it, to any hazardous extent.

. . . . . .

Thine
B. B.

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

SEPTEMBER 12TH, 1848
BURY ST. EDMUNDS

MY DEAR BARTON,

It is certainly very scandalous in me to have before me two letters of yours unanswered, particularly the earlier of the twain which amused me much and showed me the value of true fame. The Quakers evidently regard your poetical genius with much complacency, although they may profess, as a lesson to the profane, indifference to such accomplishments or even now and then call them hard names—"vinum daemonum" and the like.

I saw a neighbour of yours—Mr. Corrants (is that the way to spell a word that used to be "*White*"?) last week. He was so good as to call on me, and I was twice bidden to meet him at dinner, but was obliged to decline for the same cause that borders my paper with black. It is one of the many advantages I derive from our having become chums and correspondents that Mr. Corrants should come and look at me. I fear he thought me "marvellous ill-favoured" and somewhat of a sloven. For I had been all day at my desk and, though shaven, was unkempt, and in blouse and slippers. Hint please (when time serves) that in my broidered waistcoat and with the aid of macassar and burnt-cork I look very differently, and you may indeed allege that Mr. C. has not seen me. I am an evening fool.

We have had a great man here—and I have been walking with him and aiding him to eat salmon and mutton and drink port—George Borrow [1]—and what is more we fell in with some gypsies and I heard the speech of Egypt, which sounded wondrously like a medley of broken Spanish and dog Latin. Borrow's face lighted

[1] George Borrow, 1803-1881, author of the *Bible in Spain*, 1843; *Gypsies in Spain*, 1841; *Lavengro*, 1851; *Romany Rye*, 1857.

by the red turf fire of the tent was worth looking at. He is ashy-white now—but twenty years ago, when his hair was like a raven's wing, he must have been hard to discriminate from a born Bohemian. Borrow is best on the tramp: if you can walk 4½ miles per hour, as I can with ease and do by choice, and can walk 15 of them at a stretch—which I can compass also—then he will talk Iliads of adventures even better than his printed ones. He cannot abide those Amateur Pedestrians who saunter, and in his chair he is given to groan and be contradictory. But on Newmarket-heath, in Rougham Woods he is at home, and specially when he meets with a thorough vagabond like your present correspondent.

Have you heard that Captn Brooke has added such treasures to his library that his rooms were enlarged to receive them. He bought books for an old song in Paris in the spring when money was so scarce, and thus is one of the very few people who has derived any benefit from the last French Revolution.

Ever yrs.
W. B. Donne

Bernard Barton to W. B. Donne

Woodbridge
September 14, 1848

Dear Donne,

When letters cross on the road it is sometimes a knotty point who is to write first. I will not give thee the benefit of that apology for silence. So I send thee Prose, Verse, and a Gay into the bargain.

Thy account of Borrow takes my fancy much. I should come in for my share of his groans, for I'm sure I should never pedestrianize with him, an' he be such a walker. I only creep and crawl, and do no great deal of either. I knew a Gent who had a very portly wife, a sort of she Daniel Lambert, who used to say he walked twice a day round her, and found that exercise enough.

Thine ever dear Donne spite of thy taciturnity,

affectly.
B. B.

J. M. Kemble to W. B. Donne

BOGNOR, SUSSEX
9/20/48

Who could have anticipated four years ago that two hundred charters (Anglo-Saxon) should be found at Winchester, and which seem never to have been noticed by any one: and what a flood of light have they not thrown upon the archæology of our law. They are for all Germany, as well as for ourselves, an invaluable monument. Full of constitutional lore, historical data, mythological allusion, philological facts. There exists nothing like them all over Europe, and their publication is rightly felt to mark a most important era in the study of Germanic antiquity. I gather this from the compliments which the great northern associations have thought fit to bestow upon myself as the humble instrument of their preservation: within two years I have received, unsolicited and unexpected, the Diplomas of the Royal Society of History in Denmark, of the Royal Society of History in Sweden, and the very high and most honourable appointment of a corresponding member of the Königliche Akademie der Wissenschaffer in Berlin, in the historical and philosophical classes—probably the most learned body in the world. These things bear me up against much weariness of spirit, and console one for the stolid indifference of friends and fellow-countrymen.

. . . . . .

Yr. affectionate friend
J. M. KEMBLE

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

SEPTEMBER 24TH, 1848
BURY ST. EDMUNDS

MY DEAR BARTON,

I have been in my time a lawyer, a justice of the peace, an historian, a divine (having *heard* a sermon, which I *wrote*, preached in a cathedral and before a Bishop!): I have enacted Hamlet and Shylock, and trained a schoolmaster, and superintended a gaol, and am Vice-Patron to Dr. Brewer's school: I have been a (provisional) Director of a Railway Company, and

a newspaper writer, and an itinerant lecturer, and a Reviewer and a maker of dictionaries: I have broken in a colt and built three houses: I have quarrelled with my own parson and ridden in the same carriage with two bishops: I have written works which are carven in marble and imbedded in granite columns. But never till Friday last did I attain the summit of earthly dignity—that, namely, of being Head-Master to a Royal Grammar School. Donaldson was summoned to Cambridge and left to my charge his VIth Form. Twenty-two fine ingenuous lads, some of them much taller than myself, sat hushed before me and listened to my words of instruction as if they had been listening to King Lemuel's mother, who, if Solomon may be trusted, was somewhat curt and peremptory in her manner. I had not indeed a wedding garment, not being entitled in virtue of any letters of the alphabet to wear a gown. But I put on for the nonce a loose black paletot to look like one, and spectacles, and I mouthed Homer and Demosthenes as if Greek were my native speech, and my brief authority my habitual condition. Is not this transformation nearly as wonderful as your poetry's persuading a group of Quakers to smile upon a priest of Baal?

You who know Mrs. Clarkson, do you not also know Mrs. Clarkson's friend Crabb Robinson,[1] and by the way his name reminds me that I must now make a long parenthesis and return to Crabb Robinson anon. ("I speak foolishly;" but Crabb took me lately to tea with an old farmer, a brother of the said Mrs. Clarkson, Buck by name, and, marry, by nature and appearance too. Now this old Buck never comes to Bury, though he lives within 5 miles of it, never uses for ten years together an old one-horse chay, and never suffers strangers or even acquaintances to enter his doors, always excepting the said Crabb. Well we tead and talked and departed. But next morning the old one-horse chay is drawn out and dusted, and a cart horse is harnessed to it, and old Buck drives over to Bury for no other purpose than to ask Crabb who I was and whether I would not come again. There beat *that*, and you

[1] Henry Crabb Robinson, born 13th May, 1775, died 5th February, 1867. His *Diary and Correspondence* edited by Thomas Sadler, Ph.D. Macmillan, 1869.

will beat Bannagher who beat the——. Here ends the paren-

not, knowing Mrs. Clarkson, know also Crabb Lamb's friend, and the associate of Wordsworth and gers and Mad. de Stael, Coleridge and Guizot, Mr. Mr. Donne.

Ever yours most truly
WM. B. DONNE

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

BURY ST. EDMUNDS
NOV. 3, 1848

MY DEAR BARTON,

I have just time to acknowledge your letter and no more.

You twitted me sometime since, when we were pelting each other with the laurels we had respectively won, with my never having had a ship named after me. I never have—neither have you had a branch Lodge of Odd Fellows named after you. At Dereham meeteth quarterly a club connected with the Manchester Central Association entitled the "*Cowper and Donne Lodge*,"[1] and what is more, on anniversaries they perambulate the Market, with blue silk banners and cockades bearing my name in letters of gold.

Have I written since I fell from innocency. Have I told you that I have been to a Ball? I that have walked hitherto uprightly and nearly avoided promiscuous assemblies of dancing men and dancing women. Plays and Jenny Linds, and midnight compotations I confess to. But there was till now a speck of unworldliness in my heart, just a residue of grace and what *you* cannot appreciate, baptismal washing. It is gone, and I am swept and garnished and expecting daily to have seven spirits knocking at my door.

Ever thine
WM. B. DONNE

[1] This club is still in existence, 1904.

Bernard Barton to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
Nov. 26, 1848

DEAR DONNE,

Edward FitzGerald is still in town, unless he be gone to see his mother at Brighton, and I fear we shall not have him down in dear, dull, dirty old Suffolk for another fortnight. But he has promised to eat his Christmas dinner with us. I wish I could compel thee to come and sit forenent him on that occasion. I hardly know whether we may calculate on many more foregatherings, but I live in hopes. I know not where he could go to be more appreciated, or more highly loved and esteemed, and I believe he has a lurking love of old familiar haunts. I have let the Ipswich man have my Ditty, without any Signature, and on his assurance that he will keep his own counsel as to its authorship.

Thine ever affectionately
B. B.

W. B. Donne to R. C. Trench

BURY
DEC. 9, 1848

MY DEAR TRENCH,

Charles has not been to Bury School for a twelvemonth. His military propensities made Greek and Latin more than usually useless. I think and hope his martial ardour is cooling down; he very sensibly gives up all idea of my buying him a commission in the English army. . . .

Mess uniform and officerial habits being anything rather than economical, and without family interest, promotion being very slow and dubious. Our men fight well enough, otherwise the system of the English army is the worst in Europe. Our chances of a commission in the Indian Army are I fear much diminished by the death of poor Charles Buller, who had proved himself a most zealous friend, and would have been I doubt not a most efficient one ultimately. However that was a national loss, and I must not murmur at my small portion of it.

There is one trade in our days eminently the worst a man

can follow; that of a "gentleman". The three next worst are [pace tuâ] the three learned professions. I may go down to a very brief posterity, but not as a Roman historian after all.

Macleane, Principal of Brighton College, has enlisted me among others (Blakesley, Thompson, Merivale, Malden) in a scheme for editing College and School Classics, and supplying at home what we have so long imported from the Continent. The editions are to have English excursuses and notes, and the Editor of the whole, author for Colleges, to compress or select portions for Schools. I have rashly undertaken "Tacitus" as my share of the work. My notes for a history will come in for notes to an historian, and my name will be in letters of gold when the book is bound. Other designs on Roman History (besides a miserable palsied resuscitation of the U.K.S. for Baldwin forthcoming) I have none. I have found my level and shaken hands with ambition. An occasional article in the "Edinburgh" and the Magazines and plenty of anonymous work for dictionaries, etc., suits me much better than long projects. Am I not in my 42nd year? Is it not better done, as others use, to put guineas in my pocket from time to time than to venture guineas on a book no one would read, much less buy? You must not however imagine me idle. I am really driving a very profitable business with prospect of increase, and I thus compensate to my family for having avoided a profession. It is much to know one's limit and to be content with obscurity.

I have been trying to hammer into Smith the virtues of gossip and good writing. In recommending such works I would the gods had made Smith even as poetical as Audrey; but they have not, so I fear my counsel is like to resemble Ahitophel's in all respects but its consequences to myself. But I fancy I am to have a pretty slice of the Memoirs as I have some means of access to private papers of Norfolk families, etc., and, from my lounging and garrulous habits, have stored up a fund of anecdotes relative to East Anglican Cantabs at once pithy and profitable for such a book. Smith and myself will thus make up Antony A. Wood between us. I had long intended to publish a volume on Norfolk worthies—after the manner of Fuller and H. Coleridge—and I have enough and to spare for the

Athenian project also. I have now given you the best proof in my power that I am well qualified to furnish gossip to a Dictionary, and that I am exhibiting at least one sympton of declining years—garrulity.

If you will take Charles and myself in during the Xmas holidays for a day or two we will gladly come; the other visit had better be made in the summer, as Mrs. Trench can then at all times send the girls to romp in the garden and not be obliged to take thought about their catching cold. I cannot however see any justice in our coming this time to you when you have never yet come accompanied to Bury, and we are nearer London than you.

With best regards to Mrs. Trench and love to my god-daughter and her brothers and sister.

Believe me

Ever affectionately yrs.

W. B. DONNE

W. B. Donne to Edward FitzGerald

JAN. 4, 1849

MY DEAR FITZGERALD,

I have just heard from Barton that you have left Boulge, but may return thither ere long. I should like of all things to pass a few hours with you at your Cottage, while I am in your neighbourhood, and will tell you my plans, if perchance they may square with yours. I come to Ufford on the 15th inst.; stay there till Thursday afternoon, which I spend with Barton, and on the Saturday I am off for London and Hampshire. I would therefore come to you on Friday morning, and leave you next day in time for the coach or omnibus that will take me to Ipswich for 2 o'clock train. Let me hear from you before the 15th, supposing you get this note in time, as, being directed to Boulge, it may perchance lie there unopened. I too have Spedding's "glorious book," which I prefer to any modern reading. Reading one of his "evenings" is next to spending an evening with the Author.

I have not read a very different work, Macaulay's—but have looked over certain chapters. It is neither better nor worse than

I expected: will go down the public throat as history, for a century to come. I have detected some strange slips of the pen and the memory, some of which, at least, seem to have been occasioned by inordinate love of embellishment. However these may and will be corrected, but nothing can correct the air of Whig self-sufficiency that pervades the book. It was begotten in Holland House in the days of Grey and Mackintosh—good days for *then* but not for *ever*.

I trust '49 will be less harassing and more prosperous to you than '48 has been, and that you are assured how truly I honour and esteem you.

Yrs. ever
Wm. B. Donne

Bury St. Edmunds
January 4th

W. B. Donne to R. C. Trench

Bury St. Edmunds
January 28th, 1849

My dear Trench,

We have had a sharp battle at cross purposes, and the result has been only partially satisfactory. On the one hand I was delighted that my dear boy was able to visit you, and on the other I am grieving that we have not met. Had I not been pre-engaged to Kemble at Fulham all Friday, I would have awaited you at the Hummums or sought you at the College. But all this was not to be; neither could I have managed to dine at the "Sterling" on Tuesday, as this week in any case I must have, like Dan, "abode in my breeches," *i.e.*, remained at home. Charles brings with him such descriptions of your party and your place as make me for the nonce envious of his better luck. However I hope to be even with him ere many months are over, always under protest that you ought to bring a detachment to Bury.

I called on Maurice on Saturday morning with some faint hopes that you might be there, the card left at the Hummums being binomial.

I found Kemble surprisingly well at Fulham, and to my very great pleasure accompanied by three very well mannered children

and apparently well done by, by their governess. Kemble is very justly pleased at the reception of his book, and having read it very carefully I can warrant its goodness. It will have to live its time, as few people care much for the Incunabula of Law, or for Anglo-Saxon doings. But its contents will first percolate through other works, and archæological societies, and then gradually English Antiquaries will acknowledge the merits of the "Saxons in England".

Ever yrs. affectionately
W. B. Donne
Jan., 1849

ODE TO MERRY CHRISTMAS

By a Gentleman in Trouble

W. B. Donne to Bernard Barton

I

The melancholy days are come, the saddest of the year,
For Christmas boxes people ask and Christmas bills appear;
'Tis very sweet to drink and eat for twelve months upon trust,
But Christmas, like a Turnpike Gate, says Pay or stop you must.

II

Your Grocer takes the wall of you, you Cap the Baker's boy,
And meeting with your Tailor may your peace of mind destroy:
And boys and girls grow riotous, and servants ask for leave
At *your* expense their cousins—the *Policemen*—to receive.

III

But Christmas ills and yearly bills are not the only bore;
"*The pleasures of the season*" I equally deplore;
I cannot hunt, I never shoot, I seldom go to Balls,
And Whist I leave to Dowagers and Gentlemen in smalls.

IV

From Christmas until Candlemas good-bye to rest and leisure;
Each note begins "Dear Mr. D. we hope to have the pleasure".
And Mr. D. whose pleasure is to sit at home and muse,
"Exceedingly regrets he can't"—more frequently refuse.

V

When doors are barred and curtains drawn and frosty is the air,
I like to smoke or read or joke within a deep arm-chair;
I'm sick of seeing "fish and soup," mince-pies and "Norfolk Turkies,"
And every night am dizzy quite with Polkas and Mazurkas.

VI

Oh! when I was a "hopeful youth" and when "a nice young man,"
If any one invited me to Balls, I cut and ran;
I thought *Quadrilles* the worst of ills, and as for a *Cotillon*
I'd sooner preach, or clean the pigs, or sing, or ride postillion.

VII

A sage there was of yore—at least I think I've been so told,
Who boasted he was learning more and more as he grew old;
Though not a sage, like him I age, and am to learn constrained
How sixty people through a night may best be entertained.

VIII

I can't express, you cannot guess, what trouble I am in,
Domestic revolutions in my family begin:
The Tables all are turned on me, the carpets taken up,
We've thirty couples asked to-night to tea and dance and sup.

IX

The walls they all are hung with lamps, two fiddlers are hired;
And brandy-punch and negus for the dancers are required,
Turkies, and hams and tongues and brawn and sherry and bucellas,
And such a lot of tarts and cakes, Italian creams and jellies.

X

I never was in all my days in such a situation!
And greatly stand in need of some "religious consolation";
So wishing you a glad NEW YEAR, and wishing it were July,
And all my troubles over.

Believe me
Yours most truly
W. B. D.

Bernard Barton to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
JAN. 7, 1849

DEAR DONNE,

Thy Christmas Ditty has given divers and sundry of us a hearty laugh; so I pray thee to bear thy Christmas troubles pleasantly, as they contribute so largely to the pleasure of thy friends. Edward FitzGerald had thy note, for he *left it* here for me to see, but I did not see him. I conclude thou hast heard or will hear from him anent it. We shall hope to see thee on the Thursday afternoon by either four or five, letting us know which hour will best suit thee, and then we will have a

plain bit of dinner and a cozy evening without any fuss. If I find E. FG. likely to be in the county at the time I will book him to be of our party. I, too, have had my Christmas trouble, in the shape of a rather delicate dilemma. A certain Mr. William Vernon writes to me from Cambridge that he is about to publish a volume of Poems, dedicated by permission to the Earl of Carlisle, and modestly begs permission to send his MS. to me, that I may furnish a preface to said book, as he thinks such an opening bearing a name of some celebrity in the literary world might aid it. Wilt thou ever again compare thy honours with mine? Only fancy such an application from one I never heard of; or still worse fancy my compliance, and receiving a MS. volume of Poetry about which I might be wholly unable to say a single word. Fancy my mortification in having to tell a Vernon so. I have, however, I think, got out of the scrape by sending him the following four verses. He will hardly print them for a preface:—

TO W. J. VERNON

Used up! worn out! limping on my last legs!
Alike unfit to teach the world—or learn!
Draining life's mingled goblet to its dregs!
Waiting in Charon's boat to take my turn!

Ask not of me, my unknown Brother Bard,
To lend thy muse the sanction of a name
Almost as luckless, and as evil starr'd
As e're was muster'd on the roll of fame.

Trust to thy noble Patron's, and thine own,
His on that list, methinks, stands proudly high;
And Vernon's has not been a name unknown
Among the Stars of that bright galaxy.

But chiefly trust thy Muse's *Native Worth!*
For if that fail thee all thy hopes are vain;
No Poet's Preface, Patron's noble Birth,
Availingly can aid a Minstrel's Strain!

B. B.

If the man have Genius, Spirit or Common-sense he will see that the last verse contains the most rational advice and counsel I could give him, and he will of course forgive me for backing out of so onerous and awkward a position. Why I have a

volume full of my own verse written since my "Households" if I could find time to copy and lick them into a presentable shape, and if I thought I had a Ghost of a chance of finding a Publisher who would give me *anything* for them—but if I can't find time, health or spirits to get my own bantlings fit to bring into the drawing-room, how can I attempt to play the part of Gentleman Usher, or Nurse—wet or dry—for the progeny of others?[1]

Thine ever
B. B.

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

BOULGE
WOODBRIDGE
MARCH 9, 1849

MY DEAR DONNE,

Our good friend Barton has died [Feb. 19] leaving very little worldly goods behind him; and we do not yet know what Miss B. will have or what else she is to do with herself.

I (who was to have gone to Norfolk a fortnight ago) have waited here, looking over his papers, letters, etc., more because it amused her, poor thing, to turn over all these things with one so intimate with her father, than for any good that can come of it. There are letters from C. Lloyd, Mitford, Southey, etc: but no great shakes; and B. B.'s life would scarce make a thread to hang these on, even if they were available in other respects. I want to ask you about a volume of *Selections* from B. B.'s poems; which I propose for two reasons; first that Miss B. desires to see such a monument to her father: and secondly *I* think it might be made the means of bringing in some pounds into her pocket, a matter she does not think of.

. . . . . .

Out of the 9 volumes B. B. published, I am sure one might be got of agreeable poetry, better than sermons at all events.

I should not meddle with this to be sure but that I wish to do a service to Miss B.

[1] This is the last letter written by B. Barton to W. B. Donne, and a month later the Quaker bard breathed his last. Had he any premonition of the nearness of his end, one wonders, when he wrote these lines, "Waiting in Charon's boat to take my turn."

Now I want you to think of this and give me your advice about it.

. . . . . .

Pray let me hear from you as soon as you can give any advice on all this.

Yrs. ever
E. FitzGerald

W. B. Donne to his son Charles

Bury St. Edmunds
March 11, 1849

My dear Charles,

. . . . . .

There was a Tradesman's Ball a few nights since here, and Hanby Holmes was one of the Stewards. On his way home about 5 in the morning, being dark, and he very short-sighted Hanby fell over a drunken man, lying at full length on the pavement. Hanby went for a policeman to take his stumbling-block into custody. The policeman roused him, asking what he meant by lying there drunk. "Oh," says the fellow, "take me home, take me home, I have been run over by an *omnibus*."

. . . . . .

Ever yrs. affect.
W. B. Donne

W. B. Donne to R. C. Trench

Bury St. Edmunds
5/9/49

My dear Trench,

It is an unnatural act in the father of many children to apply for aid to the father of more. But I want your personal as well as your pecuniary aid. I know there was formerly some exchange of gifts poetical between Bernard Barton[1] and yourself in which you obtained the brazen armour. He has left his daughter, a most exemplary and accomplished person, very scantily provided for, and was in fact himself worked to death by hard task-masters. Miss Barton is a church-woman

[1] Bernard Barton died 19th February, 1849; and the *Selections from his Poems and Letters*, edited by his daughter, was published the same year.

having quitted the "Friends" many years ago. Her income goes with her Father, *viz.*, his salary as bank clerk and his pension from the Privy Purse.

I should be very glad of your "name and interest". I have little acquaintance with the Bishop of Oxford and less or none with Archdeacon Hare. Their names would be very valuable and the object is really a good one. I have seen some of the poems and most of the letters; the subscribers will not only do a good deed but have a good book for their money.

Thanks for the pamphlet which I like very much. Is it true that the Bishop of Oxford, as "The Record" imputes to him, has said he joined the "Sterling" to convert the heathen? There was no mention of this in our deed of Incorporation.

Yrs. ever most truly
W. B. DONNE

W. B. Donne to R. C. Trench

BURY ST. EDMUNDS
MAY 26, 1850

MY DEAR TRENCH,

I have been enforced to read Southey's "Life and Correspondence" with some heed, as I have been reviewing and abstracting the volumes, not however with more than pleasure. Southey's history is the most heroic picture of a literary life in our language. Perhaps as regards manner his letters are inferior to Cowper's, but what letters are equal to Cowper's?

In matter however Southey is much richer, and the spectacle his biography presents of unwearied methodical devotion to learning, is a lesson to every one engaged in a similar track. It is somewhat mortifying to discover that Southey's original works scarcely put anything into his purse, whereas his more mechanical labour in editing and reviewing enabled him to feed and clothe himself.

The mortification indeed is rather for you than me, since I fancy with all your fame you have realised less than I by job work. But then you will say Posterity—aye, but my wings are not strong enough to reach it, so my compliments to posterity and sincere regrets that he lived too far off for me to call upon him.

SOUTH GREEN HOUSE, MATTISHALL

I have for so many years kept away from the Pan Apostolicon that I trust my absence in 1850 will not offend you. What with the journey, the sojourn in London, and the Banquet, the celebration is beyond my purse, and this year is not likely to be an *Annus Mirabilis* with me as regards money; for next month I lose my tenant at Mattishall, and at Michaelmas, unless something turns up, I fear I must drop my rents. Moreover we have in August next, a day of ceremony here which will cost me some monies. 1850 completes the 300th year of King Edward's School at Bury, so we propose having a re-union of scholars, and a dejeuner, and as many Bishops, Judges, and Members of Parliament as we can claim, or tempt to come. They have made me chairman of Committee, and besides issuing circulars and covenanting with Innkeepers, I am in duty bound to lodge and board for the time, such of my former co-mates as will visit me. I wish you had been trained by King Edward. I would have taken no denials.

Yr. affect. friend
W. B. DONNE

W. B. Donne to R. C. Trench

AUGUST, 1850

MY DEAR TRENCH,

I must seem the most graceless of guests in having allowed nearly a fortnight to elapse without thanking Mrs. Trench and yourself for all your kindness to me and mine, and for a visit which we all so thoroughly enjoyed, but as soon as I reached home I found that nearly all the arrangements for the Tercentenary Commemoration would virtually devolve upon myself, and that during my absence the details had become formidable and imperative. I have been in fact for the last ten days engrossed by arranging precedence, assigning speeches and places, directing the number of boiled chickens and jellies, corresponding with Judges, Archdeacons and Innkeepers, measuring floors, drilling waiters, listening to excuses, encouraging the timid, rebuking the forward, practising tying a white neck-cloth (vulge a choaker) brushing my best coat, devising smooth speeches, and practising the art of bowing with sufficient distinction to

lords spiritual and temporal on the one hand and to M.P.'s or ordinary mortals on the other. We have sped well, but how we have sped you shall learn from a Bury paper which I will forward by Tuesday's post.

And now my dear Mrs. Trench, let me thank you both for your kindness to my dear girls. I cannot but feel it as a great privilege for them to have made acquaintance with your charming family and with yourselves, and I trust this beginning is an earnest of the unbroken intimacy between our respective households. No father's care can ever compensate to daughters for a mother's loss, and I therefore rejoice the more that mine have acquired such friends, so able to read their dispositions and so willing to extend to them counsel and affection. We are all the better for our visit.

I am afraid you had ugly weather for the Island. Thursday in London was a day of incessant rain. Wednesday out of London seems to have been equally hydraulic. However, we contrived to see a great deal, and as good actions although expensive are comfortable, I do not grudge the extra shillings I was obliged to pay the cabmen for transit.

My love to all the children. I have forgotten neither the beer nor the autographs. As soon as the whirl of Friday is out of my head I will send the one and the recipe for the other.

Mrs. Sartoris[1] bade me say she admired both your poetry and your parables, and hoped you had not quite forgotten *her*.

Ever yrs. affly.
W. B. Donne

W. B. Donne to R. C. Trench

Undated

My dear Trench,

I should have immediately answered your former letter, had I not been curious to know your opinion of Miss. E. Taylor's application.

[1] Mrs. Sartoris neé Adelaide Kemble, the celebrated singer, was daughter of Charles Kemble and sister of Mrs. Fanny Kemble and John Mitchell Kemble.

First of the first, you have given me the truest pleasure by the terms in which you speak of my dear Charles, and I am the more gratified by your opinion since it coincides with my own impressions of his character.

I am induced to think Charles's military inclinations sprung from discouragement in his school studies. The system here does very well for hard-headed and strong-nerved lads, but Charles resembles me in inability to get up a subject in a given time, and he cannot work unless he understands at the same time.

. . . . . .

So, in the second place you do not consider me as an "illegible" person (note Mrs. Malaprop) altogether, for University College purposes! I have had a note this morning from Miss Taylor asking me to tea on my next visit to London, and to a conference with her, but there the matter must rest awhile as I cannot leave home at present.

. . . . . .

Disraeli seems to have broken down at once as leader of the Protectionists. He will always be a valuable second to any party. But a leader needs three qualities—all of which Disraeli singularly wants—station, character and discretion.

Cobden and his friends have already done this good that they have obliged the Whigs to think about retrenchment in earnest. I dined yesterday with a party of stout and angry Protectionists, warm from the meeting with the Duke of Richmond. It was curious to hear what radical doctrines on the subject of finance they held—equalisation of taxes and vigorous supervision of the budget. I had no occasion to say much, "fecit indignatii versum". They even admitted the yeomanry to be a needless burden and that Prince Albert did not want so many horses. It was really very strange and amusing. I believe the agriculturists are very much distressed, but their distress arises from the effects of the defunct corn laws. They have put their monies into the land, and will not see that in a year or two it will be a good investment. Distance and freightage must always be an indirect protection against the foreign grower.

Yours ever affectionately

W. B. Donne

This letter and the next refer to a proposal made by Miss Emily Taylor and Frederick Denison Maurice that Mr. Donne should try for the post then vacant at University College, London, of Professor of Language and Literature. At first he was very much tempted to do so, but ultimately declined, being too scrupulously honest to undertake work for which he did not feel himself to be thoroughly competent. It was another year or two before the "London Cap" was found to fit him.

W. B. Donne to R. C. Trench

BURY ST. EDMUNDS
Nov. 2, 1850

MY DEAR TRENCH,

It really gave me a moment's pain that you should have thought it needful to apologise for an oversight which was so easy to commit.

Supposing "Literature" should predominate over "Language" I should have much the same chance of doing my work creditably as if the Chair had been historical. From Chaucer downwards I have studied English Literature very pervasively and closely, and have both written and lectured on the progress of English Prose and Poetry. I infer however from a very kind letter from Professor Maurice that Language is the "Cheval de bataille," and in order to give instruction to any purpose in that department the University needs a philologist like Kemble or the late Mr. Garnet. Indeed I do not see how a lecturer could stir a step in language without being well versed in at least Anglo-Saxon and Middle English. Moreover I am a man of extremely susceptible nerves, and the idea of incompetence would either paralyse me or render me wretched. In History or Literature I should blaze away with great effrontery, but in language should speak with bated breath. I see not whence I could devise testimonials for such a Professorship: I could as regards history appeal to various articles and to my numbers on Roman History and to many competent persons who have heard me lecture ("I speak as a fool"), but I have written nothing on philology, nor could any one justly say that I am a grammarian. The only testimonials I could obtain would be that "I am civil and attentive". I therefore think that first thoughts are best and see no grounds for withdrawing my decline.

Besides this very morning a bomb has fallen into my study which renders me nearly incapable of taking any more work at present. It has come in the form of a letter from Macleane requiring my Tacitus for the printer early in 1851. I am under covenants to complete it, so I must go work tooth and nail, refuse all invitations, shave half my head and banish my acquaintance. However this is merely an accident. I do not think myself equal to one portion of the duties of the Chair and therefore will await something else to turn up. Mr. Macawber has ultimately prospered, and I do not despair of one day a London Cap being found to fit me.

With best remembrances to Mrs. Trench

Ever yrs. affately.

Wm. B. Donne

"Gentleman's Mag.," Nov. Wordsworth's Autobiography is mine—not room enough to say it well.

J. M. Kemble to W. B. Donne

Hanover,
23/10/50

I am heartily sick of my banishment: nevertheless I have turned it to some use, and Hanover has made a decent contribution to my stock of interesting or useful materials. Among Leibnitz's correspondence is a good deal which is important to our history, and seems quite new: not only his letters to the Electress Sophia, the Duchess of Orleans and other princesses of the Palatine family; but there are also valuable correspondence with Burnet the Bishop, Burnet of Kemnay, a relative of his, Ker of Kersdale and Yoland, much of which is unprinted. But the most striking is a MS. collection of some hundred political characters with anecdotes and descriptions of the English notabilities of the time, drawn up by some Englishman who had good access to information about 1712-1714, and sent to the Electoral Prince (Geo. 1st) evidently as a guide to him in his dealings with the English Court. These I have obtained leave to copy and have nearly finished; and I shall make large extracts from the Leibnitziana. There is also a curious tract on the Con-

stitution and habits of England designed for the same purpose of instructing the future king, sent by G. S. "from his lodging at Lambeth in 1705" and which also seems worth transcribing. Who can G. S. be? It naturally costs me a good deal of trouble collating all the details, etc., with the accounts given in the Memoirs and histories of the time, but it will be all useful one day. Some of the printed materials are in fact not easily accessible here, and perhaps, inaccessible anywhere else. For example: there exists at Stuttgard a sort of Roxburgh Club, that prints all sorts of out of the way things strictly confined to the use of the Members. Their sixth volume contains a very large collection of letters from Elizabeth Charlotte (the Regent Orlean's mother) to her half-sister Raugräfin Luise von Dagenfelt; a most interesting and amusing collection—hardly fit for general reading, but full of anecdotes and curious bits of history. It is a book I have had the use of, and have carefully read. Eliz. Charlotte was the favourite niece of the great Electress Sophia, and a noble hearted woman, worthy of such an Aunt. A copy of their correspondence exists in the Ducal Library at Darmstadt, whether easily get-at-able I know not, but must leave no stone unturned to ascertain. The Princess had no secrets from her Aunt, to whom she wrote every week letters of twenty and thirty sides. What a fund: her correspondence with Caroline Princess of Wales, if it exists, must also be extremely valuable; they wrote constantly to one another and evidently in the most confidential manner. Milnes and Lord Brougham have been here; they stayed for a day or two and were very good company. Lord B. had been patronising Metternich at Brussels by dining with him: but all this don't matter, for B. himself is not more powerless in England than Metternich is in Austria, or anywhere else. He is clean wiped up and done with. Fitzroy Kelly has also been here, the scandal says, on business connected with the Hanoverian Crown jewels, which are claimed here, but these are high matters of State, dangerous for men in your and my position, so no more.

. . . . . .

Yr. affect. friend

J. M. Kemble

W. B. Donne to R. C. Trench

MAY- 1851
SAT. MORNING

MY DEAR TRENCH,

How will Thursday pass off [the opening of the Exhibition of 1851]. This is the first meeting of nations without some taint of blood in it, either to plan or to patch up wars. When do you go? I should like to accompany you. I must be in London in June as I am to be, I fancy, Chairman at the Pan Apostolicon. This is Spedding and Thompson's doing for which may Lucifer requite them. I cannot say unluckily that "I am unaccustomed," etc., since it has been my evil lot to be Chairman sundry times: but I had rather address a Norwich mob than the "Apostles," not that I mean to compare them, but the latter are so formidable.[1]

I am reading with much interest Wordsworth's "Memoirs". How very beautiful are Miss Wordsworth's remarks in his journal. She was the born poet of the two.

Best regards to Mrs. Trench.

Yr. affect.
W. B. DONNE

W. B. Donne to Miss Worship[2]

NOV. 15, 1851

DEAR MISS WORSHIP,

I wished very much for you when Mrs. Kemble was here, not merely on account of the Readings but because you would have chimed well together. Norwich beat us in the number of its audience but not in the intelligence, as we really had everybody from the neighbourhood likely to appreciate such

[1] "I (Dr. Hort) left Cambridge on Wednesday afternoon (June, 1851), and then went down to Blackwall and there had a most pleasant dinner (annual) with the Apostles old and new. Donne of Bury St. Edmund's was President, and I, as junior member, Vice-President. Maurice, Alford, Thompson, F. Lushington, Tom Taylor, James Spedding, Blakesley, Venables, etc., were there. Monckton Milnes and Trench were unable to come" (*Life and Letters of F. J. A. Hort, D.D., D.C.L.*, edited by his son. Macmillan, 1896).

[2] Miss Worship, an old friend of the Donnes, once remarked to W. B. Donne's daughter, Valentia, on returning from Church one Sunday, "Why do you take off your gloves in Church?" "I don't know, I can't pray in gloves," said Valentia. "It's lucky you can pray in stockings," said W. B. Donne, looking up quietly from the book he was reading.

a lecture. I hope the experiment will be repeated next year. On the late occasion half the audience came unprepared for anything more than a simple reading of the Plays, and were much amazed to find there was a consummate impersonation also.

I have vowed this year to say "No" to all applications to lecture, and I have said "Yes" eight times beginning with the 25th inst. So much for consistency.

Our proceedings at Colchester (where by the way I found myself unexpectedly gazetted as F.R.S.) were enlivened midway by a gentleman, not on the Committee, neither in any way authorised to interpose himself, preferring to read an occasional ode. It was certainly of odes the most singular since it was all in heroic verse. I did not understand the local allusions, which it seems were extremely offensive. The following sample will give you some notion of the delicacy and seasonableness of the homage paid to greatness:—

> Oft on this platform, too, may Donne appear,
> A name with Airey's proudly welcomed here,
> For *whom* posterity will justly claim,
> A bright inscription on the page of fame!

Whom unluckily, according to Lindley Murray, must refer to Airy, so that my chances of posterity, even with the aid of the Colchester Pegasus, are very small.

Yesterday there called on me the most wonderful old gentleman I have ever seen. He walks with elasticity, has scarcely a grey hair, has infinite vivacity and is hardly changed in 30 years—for so long can I go back in recollection of him. Moreover in the evening he played two juvenile parts. This paragon is Frederic Vining [actor], the old-established Vining of 1820 I felt quite decrepit beside him. He must have eaten the Mandrake root. I want to learn his secret so have asked him to dinner. Perhaps he may be confidential in his cups.

With best regards to Mrs. Worship and all your circle.

Believe me

Yr. much obliged

W. B. Donne

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

No beginning. WOODBRIDGE postal stamp. NOV. 10TH, 1852.

. . . . . .

I must write a line to say how delighted I am with your Book. As is usual, directly I had sent to Crabbe for his copy, Loder sends me mine—and I assure you it consoled me for a cold caught in going to Woodbridge in this beastly November drip. I have marked many passages; I particularly like the account of the Highway man, the old Inns and Coaches, the stop we should come to if Railroads, etc., ceased of a sudden. And these are independent of the good stories and extracts from other people that come in, and are so agreeably strung together. This little Book shows you have now got easy use of all your good material; a freedom (of language at least) which I used to think you missed in some earlier writings. But perhaps that was from thinking yourself obliged to ride this high horse for grave work, and reviews.

I always thought that some such opening as this would let the good blood that was in you run more freely, and I hope you will now write several more such books, in as great a hurry and on the backs of as many letters as you can.

Many little errors can be corrected afterwards: all is got, if "go" is got.

I will now exercise my vocation as "Fitzdennis" on one page (107), which is so good that I want to get two words, or else my appreciation of them, right, that I may read it with unmingled pleasure. I don't understand, or else don't like roads "reared" upon piles, etc.[1] I may not understand that the old Roman

[1] "The great works of antiquity indeed, from the pyramids downward to the Mausoleum of Hadrian, are too often the Monuments of human toil, privation and death. But the roads of our more fortunate times are not cemented with the tears of myriads, *nor reared upon piles* of bleached bones. On the contrary, the construction of them has given employment to thousands, who, but for them, would have crowded to the parish for relief, or have wandered anxiously in search of work, or sauntered listlessly at the ale house door in despair of finding it.

"The great *radii* of *peaceful communication have been executed* by willing hands, and a fair day's wages has been the recompense of a fair day's work. We do not undervalue the skill and energies of the engineers of antiquity. Yet by their fruits we know and judge of the works of the Curatores Viarum, and of our Brunels and Stephensons."—From *Old Roads and New Roads*, p. 107.

Roads were really *reared* up in air above the level, etc., but is there not some word between *reared* and *laid* that would do for all roads?

In the same page I want another word for the radii of peaceful communication being "*executed*" which applies to *roads*, but is too cumbrous for the mathematical radius. These are very trifles: which I should not notice but that I want what is good to be perfect. The sentence about Sydney Smith's wit and wisdom is very good.[1]

I shall send a notice of this Book, with some extracts, to the "Ipswich Journal" and *mention your name* unless you dislike my doing so, but I suppose your being the author is so well known to many, that it may as well be to all. However if you dislike this I won't. Don't answer all these letters, I could not help writing this.

Yrs. ever affect.

E. FG.

In 1852 Mr. Donne published *Old Roads and New Roads* referred to in the last letter, a book it is said "in which his wide

[1] "We will conclude our rambles over the old roads of four Continents with the words of one whose wisdom was not surpassed by his wit, although his wit surpassed most of the wisdom of his contemporaries. 'It is of some importance,' says Sydney Smith (it is wrong to add 'The Reverend,' for no one says *Mr.* William Shakespeare or *Mr.* John Milton), 'at what period a man is born. A young man alive at this period hardly knows to what improvement of human life he has been introduced; and I would bring before his notice the changes which have taken place in England since I began to breathe the breath of life at a period amounting to seventy years.

"Gas was unknown. I groped about the streets of London in all but utter darkness of a twinkling oil lamp, under the protection of Watchmen in their grand climacteric, and exposed to every species of degradation and insult. I have been 9 hours in sailing from Dover to Calais before the invention of steam. It took me 9 hours to go from Taunton to Bath before the invention of railroads, and I now go in 6 hours from Taunton to London!

"In going from Taunton to Bath I suffered between ten thousand and twelve thousand severe contusions, before stone-breaking Macadam was born. I paid £51 in a single year for repairs of Carriage-springs on the pavement of London, and I now glide without noise or fracture on wooden pavement. I can walk, by the assistance of the police, from one end of London to the other without molestation; or, if tired, get into a cheap and active cab, instead of those Cottages on wheels which the hackney coaches were at the beginning of my life. Whatever miseries I suffered there was no post to whisk my complaints for a single penny to the remotest corners of the Empire. And yet, in spite of all these privations, I lived on quietly, and am now ashamed that I was not more discontented, and utterly surprised that all these changes and inventions did not occur two centuries ago. I forgot to add that, as the basket of Stage-Coaches in which the luggage was then carried had no springs, your clothes were rubbed all to pieces; and that even in the best society one-third of the Gentlemen at least were always drunk."—From *Old Roads and New Roads*, p. 110.

knowledge of classical literature and Modern History was turned to good account"—and also edited a book on *Magic and Witchcraft.*

About this time also he was asked whether he would accept the post of Editor of the *Edinburgh Review* if offered, but this he declined, as he said "his habits were too retired to keep him in the current of public opinion".

W. B. Donne allowed himself however to be nominated as one of the Candidates for the post of Librarian at the London Library, and in writing to his son Charles, 21st May, 1852, from Charlotte St., London, he says:—

To-day I send in my Testimonials. I shall neither be delighted nor disappointed. Neither the move nor the office will do me any harm. As there are now nearly 100 Candidates, the election cannot be decided till next week at earliest. . . .

FitzGerald has called twice: unluckily I was each time from home. He had the charge of two nieces one day: and very deliberately turned them alone into a conjurer's room, while he came to Charlotte St. Hence he went for them with an old blue dressing gown hanging on his arm.

I met two Miss Twiss' at Charles Kemble's yesterday: both well stricken in years. One had the face of a very old mastiff, and a voice deeper than a bull-frog's. Lane the artist was there; and I picked up quite an acquaintance with him. Mrs. Sartoris came to tea and sang like a nightingale. . . .

I find from Crabb Robinson that Bury has already given me the Librarianship—and removed me and mine. You can tell them that there is much still and always between cup and lip. . . .

Yr. ever affectionate father
Wm. B. Donne

The choice of the Committee fell on W. B. Donne, and leaving his mother and children at Bury for a time, he and an old servant went to live at the London Library, 12 St. James's Square.

This old housekeeper, Mary Trolloppe by name, was a great character, and amused the Londoners by walking about St. James's Square in "pattens". One day the butler at Lord Derby's said,

"If she liked to go round early he would show her the table set for a Cabinet Dinner". Mary arrived, and saw the gold plate and beautifully arranged table, but for a few minutes said nothing, then, with fierce loyalty to her Master, she burst out, "That's nothing to what we have at Mr. Donne's".

When Mary Trollope was dying, her clergyman said to W. B. Donne.: "It's of no use talking to her of the glory of the Saints; *she* will only talk of the glory of the Donnes".

The work of Librarian was thoroughly congenial to W. B. Donne, and living in London brought him in touch again with many old friends. Trench was made Dean of Westminster in 1856, while the Kembles and Speddings lived in London, and others such as Edward FitzGerald, Archdeacon Groome, Deans Blakesley and Merivale, came up at intervals and never forgot to "look him up".

Besides his work at the London Library, Mr. Donne had been acting as Deputy Examiner of Plays for his friend John Kemble, who was away in Germany collecting materials for his books. It was an office requiring more than usual tact, for there was a good deal of discontent among the Managers of Theatres just then, and Meetings had already been held proposing to abolish the office of Examiner of Plays altogether. It speaks well for the able manner in which William Donne carried out the duties of Censor, that on John Kemble's return, a Deputation of Managers waited on him, and presented him with a silver ink-stand, thanking him for the courteous way in which he had always treated them; and on the death of John Kemble in 1857, W. B. Donne was appointed his successor. In those days the upper part of the London Library was used as a residence for the Librarian, and during 1852-53 W. B. Donne lived there, going backwards and forwards to Bury, but on the expiration of his lease there in 1854, he sent his daughters to school at Brussels, and brought his mother to London.

Mrs. Fanny Kemble to W. B. Donne

DEC. 31, 1852

MY DEAR MR. DONNE,

I am very glad that the Editorship of the "Edinburgh" was offered to you;[1] it is a tribute to your ability, which

[1] In a letter to one of his sons, W. B. Donne says: "The offer was never made me directly. And all I have heard since of the matter only confirms me in my previous impression. The Longmans might have listened to the recommendation among others, but they would never have entrusted property so valuable to an untried and unknown hand. So that in fact, my refusal, if it were one, has done me no harm whatever."

I think even your modesty cannot have prevented you receiving with pleasure. I am very glad you did not accept it—for apart from the personal disqualification you plead, and which I do not admit—I mean your incompetency—I think your prudential reasons against taking it well judged and wise. It seems almost an impertinence thus to pronounce upon a course of action you have seen fit to adopt, but I am writing hurriedly, and you in some measure have challenged my opinion by informing me of the circumstances—and my opinion is nothing but approbation; therefore if it is impertinent, you are bound to excuse it. I must leave what you say to me about the passage in Othello for discussion till we meet. *You* say that "unbonneted" is the true reading, that meaning "*without raising the bonnet to superior rank*"—whereas "un-bonneted" appears to me to mean without raising the bonnet to superior rank—we will fight it out over a cup of tea.

One word more about the Editorship of the "Edinburgh" (I hop backwards and forwards from one subject to another like a bird from one perch to another). I think you would have found the labour and harass of it more than your health would have well endured, and though £1,500 a year is a pretty income to put into a man's pocket—yet as you must have paid all your contributors out of that, the remains would not have been so much as the *whole*—I think.

My Colchester patrons are infinitely amiable to me. I am going back there on the 31st of next month. By-the-bye—it is just on the turn of the year—eleven o'clock at night on the 31st December, 1852.

God bless you, my dear Mr. Donne. I wish you health and happiness; the well-being and well-doing of your children; your excellent Mother's health and your own prosperity, and am

Sincerely and gratefully yours

FANNY KEMBLE

45 MELVILLE STREET
EDINBURGH

The last hour of the year

W. B. Donne to his son Charles

12 St. James Square
April 15 [1853]

My dearest Charles,

. . . . . .

I missed you very much. Arthur (Walsham) came to dinner on Sunday: and having breakfasted with Crabbe, I accompanied Spedding in the evening to Captain Sterling's, brother of my old friend John. In his garden at Knightsbridge, apart from the dwelling house, he has built himself a huge room of cast iron, and mounted on rollers so that it may not become a fixture, and belong to the owner of the ground. This building is called "The White Cottage," yet anything less like a cottage you cannot well imagine. It is more like a huge barrack room. But it is admirably warmed and lighted, and some fine old paintings adorn the walls. Here on Sunday evenings occasionally the gallant Captain receives his friends, and permits his friends to introduce their reputable acquaintance—"comme moi"—so Jem took me. Cigars and liquors are provided "ad libitum," and oysters and bread and butter for the strong-minded. This seems to me a very sensible form of hospitality and much more commendable than dinner-visiting. There I met Captain Keppel the Borneo-man, whom I had not seen for more than thirty years, and who in our private theatricals used to enact one of the Babes in the Wood, while I was his wicked Uncle. He might almost now repeat the part, as though come to ripe ages, his face is nearly as boyish as ever. He was heartily glad to see me, and appears like all his race, a hearty good fellow. On Monday I went to a soirée at Sir Charles Lyells, where there was a grand gathering of notables in science and art. . . . Gibbs was there and I had a nice chat with him. On Wednesday I drank tea with Fanny [Kemble], and met Laurence who is taking a sketch of her, and came to study her features, and to-night I am going with her to the Adelphi to see "Masks and Faces"—although therein is a woful exchange of Madame Celeste for Mrs. Sterling. So you see I am tolerably gay. I am booked for a dinner on Monday at

Cornewall Lewis's and that shall be the end for some while; as the absorption of my evenings disconcerts my plans entirely.

Ever affect. yours
W. B. DONNE

Trench was anxious that Donne should give lectures at King's College, London. The next letter refers to this.

W. B. Donne to R. C. Trench

DEC. 16/53

MY DEAR TRENCH,

The Germans recommend one, when a subject of importance is to be debated with oneself "überschlafen," to sleep over it. It is good counsel but not so easy to follow, at least for brains like mine. On the contrary I have walked over your proposal for the last two nights, much to my own annoyance.

I am afraid, with all my wish to accept, that I must decline it. (1) Because on looking over my *agenda* in positive engagements, I cannot discover that I have any leisure until next Midsummer, and (2) because I have good reason to think that the scheme will not be palatable to the Committee, or the subscribers generally. I don't think you have, and I don't see how you should have, any notion of the amount of correspondence attached to the Librarianship. There are ordinary letters to answer; extraordinary and unreasonable grumbles to soothe, or to scold, and literary questions or hints to respond to daily, besides the accounts—and then there is the *to be* classified catalogue to prepare in slips, and arrange under heads. I never attempt to do any work but library work from 11 to 6 P.M.

Seven hours work of any kind, even if routine work, takes the freshness out of one, and I am seldom good for much again until 8. Then comes the Lord Chamberlain generally four times in the week, and no small amount of correspondence and book-keeping in the course of the year, over and above the reading and making out the licences. This you will say will come to an end, but when? certainly not for another nine months.

That ugly whelp Tacitus is now only to print, but the printing and correcting will occupy four months at the least, and Parker is gaping for his Roman History, which, being an abridgment, is only the more difficult to write. So I really do not see whence my leisure for preparing or giving lectures is to come from; and I am almost glad to have been knocked on the head at King's College, as I am sure you would have been dissatisfied with me. Your zeal touched my heart, and made me for a few days think myself capable of doing wonders; but on cooler reflection I fancy that I have got my just load for the next six months to come.

I believe people think mine a light place; I wish they would try it a week, who do so. I must therefore beg you to convey to the Committee of King's College my gratification, my thanks, and my sincere regrets, and in terms which no one knows better than yourself to employ.

For yourself accept my heartiest thanks for all your kindness. In the above list of "Agenda" I have said nothing about either "Edinburgh" or "Quarterly," but I really have an article on the stocks for each, and probably for their March numbers. One just finished also—*i.e.*, printed for next "Westminster".

With best regards

Ever affectionately y^rs.

W. B. DONNE

Edward FitzGerald to Mrs. Edward Donne

LONDON LIBRARY
12 ST. JAMES SQUARE
TUESDAY, 1853 OR 4

DEAR MRS. DONNE,

Allow me to thank you for the many kind messages (including good *eatables*) you have been so good as to send me. I am almost ashamed of having stayed so long with your son: but I feel honestly certain that I put him to as little inconvenience of any kind as a Guest can put a Host to. As for myself I must say I have never been so happy in London before. So that, if I were but to think of my own pleasure I should drag on my stay here by one excuse or another; but the longer I stay here, the

more I shall feel going away. I am about to go to Oxford, chiefly to see the Cowells; though not to live at their house. I must once more begin solitary housekeeping. After Oxford, I go to see a sister at Bath. I mean really to be off as soon as a bad cold now upon me relaxes, the day after to-morrow, I think.

I am glad you are coming to live here, it will be good for all parties, I think.

Please give my regards to Blanche and Valentia, and believe me yrs. very truly,

EDWARD FITZGERALD

W. B. Donne to his son Charles

LONDON LIBRARY
DEC. 13, 1854

MY DEAREST CHARLES,

. . . . . .

Among Charles Kemble's effects is a tin-box filled with old fashioned red pocket books containing most curious and minute registers of the stage from 1790-1817, and besides, a number of most interesting anecdotes about the people he associated with.

Fanny Kemble and myself are going through them regularly, and should make better speed were it not that almost every page suggests something or other and sets us talking: so we advance as slowly as the Dominie in arranging Col. Mannering's Library. I don't think Boaden saw these Memoranda when he wrote J. P. Kemble's life. Did I tell you that I am the owner of Charles Kemble's watch, and a very good one?

. . . . . .

Ever yr. affect.
W. B. DONNE

W. B. Donne to R. C. Trench

12 ST. JAMES SQUARE
DEC. 21, 1855

MY DEAR TRENCH,

I gave your message to Mrs. Kemble, and she thanks you much therefor, and requests that you will write to herself, stating your wishes respecting the Readings at Win-

chester. Address—"Mrs. F. Kemble, 16 Savile Row". The letter will be forwarded to her in the North as she does not return to Town for some 10 or 14 days. I have not the least doubt that she will come most gladly for a day to Itchenstoke.

I am sure you think me an idle graceless dog for being so slow with the printers. But in the first place, if you will take my place for a week as Librarian *and* as Controller of Her Majesty's servants in 27 of Her Majesty's Houses, you will find yourself often thwarted in your best intentions for the evening, and also when 6 o'clock comes P.M. rather the worse for wear. I assure you I am often so tired, having more spirit than sinew in my microcosm, that I am obliged to rest my brains for an hour or so before I can recommence my day's work. Moreover I cannot, as I could (Consule Torquato) burn the midnight oil till 3 or 4 in the morning.

(2nd) As I grow old I become more fastidious in my composition. I never had, nor ever shall have, the "pen of a ready writer". My wit like Iago's acts like bird-lime, it plucks out brains and all ("voici mon apologue").

Wishing you and yours every temporal and spiritual blessing of the season.

I am ever affectionately yrs.
W. B. DONNE

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

12 ST. JAMES SQUARE
MAY 28TH, 1856

I will begin with matters personal to myself, because you kindly expressed a wish to hear about them. Charles came through this time with flying colours, and satisfied the examiners that his mishap at Christmas was owing to idleness and not incapacity. His degree is conferred to-day, and to-morrow I expect him and Mowbray to come up to the illumination. Dr. Carpenter got the Registrarship,[1] and I do not think the Electors could have chosen a better man: moreover he had some claim

[1] Dr. William Benjamin Carpenter, born 1812, died 1885, was the successful candidate for the Registrarship of the University of London. He held the post till 1879.

upon them being a member of the London University. Immediately after the election Mr. J. Shaw le Fevre came across from Burlington House to tell me (a perfect stranger to him until then) that I was not the winning candidate, but that my Testimonials had attracted notice, and that, in case I offered myself for any similar post he would do all he could to assist me. This was most handsome and kind. I replied after thanking him cordially that I was not in the least disappointed, inasmuch, as you can certify, I had never any expectations of success. Mr. Shaw le Fevre was so evidently in earnest that if I do try again for a better office than the one I have, I will certainly take him at his word. But I do not much think that I shall trouble him, canvassing in any shape being utterly distasteful and detestable to me. Were it not for my girls indeed, who are not well placed here, I should make up my mind to be quite content for life. It is not a bad position. I am useful in it to many persons, and am utterly without ambition.

. . . . . .

Never a very good collector of news I have really none now to send. Yes, I have. I have lived long enough to be promised a Testimonial! I am as much surprised as Benedick was when he found he had lived long enough to be married. A few days ago I received a very polite note from Mr. Benjamin Webster informing me that the Managers of the Theatres wished me to appoint a day and hour in next month for receiving them, as they desired to give me a token of their common obligations to me for punctuality, etc., etc., as Examiner of Plays during the term I held the office. I must say that I am very much gratified, since the goodwill of these gentlemen has been purchased by no concessions on my part; on the contrary, for a year or two many of them murmured at the increased strictness of the régime. In my next letter I shall be able to tell you what I am presented with, though indeed I should have been perfectly pleased and contented with a *round-robin* of acknowledgment. My old enemy *La Dame aux Camelias* has at last escaped from her four years' bondage, and is now performing at the opera *La Traviata*, and in the full bloom of her original horrors! I hear that both opera houses are at present crammed four times a

week. I believe that a tenant is at length found for Mattishall, not a very profitable one: nevertheless the house will be aired and the garden weeded: and the tenant having a curacy in the neighbourhood will probably remain for a few years. I am going there in a few days to see to various matters, leaving Blanche and Valentia with Sir John Walsham at Bury: then they will go to Norfolk for some visits: and then to Cromer until the end of August. I shall take a house for them and take my mother down to it. Charles will take care of them out of doors, and look to ponies and boats. I shall remain in town and put the finishing hand to certain manuscripts that have lain by me too long, and when printed will I hope not be unwelcome to you. I shall indeed take a few days' holiday, but have neither cash nor leisure this year for a month's idleness. I have discarded my Dr. and his bottles; for neither of which had I the least occasion, being neither better nor worse than usual, and quite beyond reach of physicians or drugs. Any good news of you would do me more good than the College of Physicians and Apothecary's Hall to boot—and the best news would be the announcement of your return after a few months' sojourn in U.S. My mother is better since the weather has been warmer: I had so thoroughly prepared her for my missing the Registrarship that she did not mind the result at all. Valentia likes Mrs. Groome very much: she will have 4 lessons before she leaves London and resume them in the autumn. Mrs. G. thinks well of her voice. We put up a star to-morrow [Peace rejoicings], a sign that we are well affected folks, and also as a precaution against glazier's apprentices: and we shall have the advantage of two brilliant luminaries on either side of us. We shall all want to see the Fireworks: although as regards the Peace rejoicings I am *thankful* to be so well out of a scrape, but not *rejoicing* in the figure we cut in the war. Edwd. FitzGerald comes in now and then of an evening. He is deploring just now the approaching departure of his friends the Cowells for Calcutta, where they will remain ten years, and he fears he may never see them again, even if they both bear the climate. In one way or another we are always rehearsing the final parting of death. Has Trench told you that if the ministry remain in office until

next November he has a sort of promise from Mr. Vernon Smith of a Cadetship for his boy? Is that your doing? I have told you now all I think you will care to hear about from me, *i.e.*, principally of ourselves: but I trust you have a reserve of livelier correspondents than I am or am likely to be. Pray do not let me wait long for a letter, as, at soonest, it will be long before it can reach me. God bless you, my dear friend.

Yours ever,

WM. BODHAM DONNE

My mother and the girls send their best love. Remember me to Marie.

W. B. Donne, feeling nervous about receiving the deputation of Managers with the Testimonial, asked Edward FitzGerald to come and support him, which he did. When the time arrived an individual was ushered in, with a parcel, who proceeded to read an address, but he had not uttered many words before his "speech betrayed him," and FitzGerald cried out, "Good heavens! it's Charles!" and Charles Donne had only just time to make his exit before the real Mr. Webster arrived. The practical joke helped the situation however; all trace of nervousness disappeared and Mr. Donne received the deputation with all his accustomed dignity.

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

ST. JAMES SQUARE
JULY 17, 1856

I cannot express the delight which your letter gave me; or thank you half enough for your kindness in replying to mine so promptly. Mrs. Sartoris had previously sent me the good news of your re-union with your child; but it was even better to have it confirmed by you so fully and satisfactorily in all respects. The only bit of your letter which did not please me so well was that in which you intimate that you will probably not return to England this year. However, sorely as I miss you, and often as I think of you, I am not selfish enough to wish you to shorten happy hours for a moment, for any possible gain to myself. As I once saw Miss Butler, although she then walked unsteadily and did not speak at all, I will presume to send her my affectionate respects and a hearty "God-blessing"

to you both. Mrs. Sartoris is well and sang charmingly last Monday at her own house. She is, I am afraid, soon on the wing from town; except, however, on her evenings, I never see her, for as I rarely go out, and she a good deal, we have few opportunities for meeting. On Monday next I take my mother into the country for a month, and pick up my girls at Ipswich *en route:* probably I shall be alone until quite the end of August, for Mowbray is, and Charles will be, at Cambridge after this week. I shall take some holiday, but when or for how long is uncertain, as the time and duration must depend upon the state of my work and my finances. If I go on as I have begun, you will find a small library awaiting you on your return: for I have printed since the 17th of May two quarterly articles and one monthly—"Westminster," "National," "Fraser"—and I am just at the end of one for the "Edinburgh," over and above other matter more solid. Mattishall is certainly let, and probably for some years, and is now under repair. Trench was very near becoming a Bishop. It was even announced in the "Times" that he had been appointed: but the announcement was premature and most mischievous, for the Queen waxed wroth thereat and said "the 'Times' should not make *her* Bishops". I hope however that the publicity given to his name, and the very general satisfaction expressed at his nomination will in the end lead to a similar result. Indeed almost any other See will fit his Christian name better, for "Richard of Gloucester" has an evil sound, especially for a Bishop with a numerous family of very young children. Trench, while his name was thus being bruited abroad, gained some insight into the importunity of mankind, lay and clerical: for not only was he warmly congratulated by his credulous friends, but received also nearly 300 letters asking for places in Gloucester Diocese. A. Tennyson was in town a few days since: looking very grave with his beard and moustaches. He has just purchased the place which he has rented during the last three years in the Isle of Wight, and which he affirms to be, both for its privacy and its prospect, a very Paradise. He has made me promise to visit him, which I certainly will do one of these days. He read, I am told, 800 lines of a new poem to Mr. Browning (Mr. B. and his wife are

living at Mr. Kenyon's[1] in Devonshire Place, but poor Mr. Kenyon is not there, nor indeed, I fear, likely to live long anywhere, since he has had severe bronchitis for many months). I hope the said poem is not after the fashion of Maud, for that grates on my ear and passes all my understanding. Spedding is still in town, correcting his slices of Bacon, and disseminating such fallacies about things in general as would shock you to be told. Edward Fitz. has been at Paris and up the Rhine (the latter for the first time). But like Dr. Swell-penjus he travels from Dan to Beersheba and says "all is naught". Paris not improved and the Rhine a cockney affair. So he is gone into Suffolk to console himself with the river Deben and the beauties of Boulge. A great affliction is in store for him, since his friends the Cowells depart shortly for Calcutta and he thinks never to see them more.

The Malkins are probably off by this time to the Alps: all that delayed and troubled him was having let only his larger house at Corrybrough, and the cottage abiding on his hands. This is, I believe, all I know of *our* friends at present, and I make my letters as much of a gazette as I can, so that they may interest you. I can report that Mrs. Mitchell [her brother John's wife] was looking very well on Monday, and that Mrs. Jameson's[2] head is turned by Ristori.

What a myriad of pities it is that you could not stay long enough in England to see this charming actress. My sons have seen her much oftener than I have: for John, having had 3 places continually given him, has very kindly sent us one of them frequently, and I have made way for the youngsters. My opinion is therefore hardly worth the having: only she charmed me beyond expression by her tragic genius and her grace and beauty, and by her exquisite voice and elocution. Mr. Harness[3] says were he twenty years younger than he is, he could admit Ristori to be a second Siddons, but at *his* age he will neither change nor multiply his idols. Her audiences have greatly im-

[1] John Kenyon, 1784-1856, poet and philanthropist, friend and benefactor to the Brownings and other men of letters.

[2] Mrs. Jameson, 1794-1860, published *Characteristics of Women*, 1832; *Sacred and Legendary Art*, 1848-52.

[3] Rev. William Harness, 1790-1869, friend and correspondent of Byron. Boyle Lecturer at Cambridge, 1822. Harness prize for a Shakespearean essay founded at Cambridge in his memory.

proved in their appreciation of her: at first they were most
/ cool and decorous; so much so that Ristori was
d, and went to the Opera purposely to see what might
matic temperature there. Finding it equally chilling,
mforted: and now, as I hear, is really warmly ap-
If such of our performers as are not too old to change
orant to understand, or too conceited to learn, would
study Ristori's acting, here is an opportunity for instruction. But they won't avail themselves of it. We are a strange people. We must burlesque whatsoever is good and beautiful: and Wigan, who ought to know better, is the great offender. He has just brought out at his theatre a *travestie* of the Medea, wherein Ristori is caricatured by Robson! I won't go to see it: but the town will, all and sundry. I want no stronger token of the decline, if not the utter decay of all dramatic feeling than this. A great artist is here: folks affect to admire, but find pleasure in laughing at her ape. Is it not monstrous? You will, I am sure, hear of her from persons much better qualified to judge than I am, so I'll say no more. My testimonial from the Managers came in the form of a very pretty silver inkstand, presented by a deputation of which Mr. Webster was spokesman. It was particularly gratifying to me, inasmuch as it evidently betokened hearty goodwill on their part—and all for simply doing at the right time what I was bound to do. I believe that the copy-books are correct in saying in round text that "Punctuality is a Virtue," and moreover a very rare one, and moreover that yourself and myself are among its few practitioners. I don't know what has come to C. Kean. He must have been bitten by something: for he has become so wondrously affectionate to me as to alarm me: craves my opinion on this and that: calls on me and tells me of his wrongs and his wars, and holds my hand in the market place until it aches. Whether it be fear or love I cannot tell: though if the former, what can have put this devil-worship into his head? "Am I a god that I should kill or make alive?" I went to Woolwich on Sunday and gained some insight both as to what a camp is, and what management is. There are nearly 4,000 men from the Crimea now under canvas on the common, artillery waggons drawn up

in squares, and horses picketed by hundreds to long lines of rope. It was known weeks beforehand that these regiments were to come, and accordingly no earthly thing was ready for them, nor would, had it been mid-winter instead of mid-summer, and the men are under canvas and the horses under the sky. Moreover, as I can depose, sound and mangy horses are tied together, and there is a general biting and rubbing throughout the host. The men and officers have brought over the queerest pets: an ostrich, a dromedary, goats, Turkish dogs, apes, and a most benevolent wild boar, who so long as you will scratch him smiles, but so you soon as you don't, turns on and rends you. Annie Woolsey (neé Walsham) seems very happy in her Woolwich home, her husband and baby. Lady Walsham is very far from well, and now shows the wounds inflicted by her boy's death. She asked much for you, and was delighted by what I could tell her. I believe Miss Cottin and Miss Thackeray be going to Egypt—not the least of the marvels I have hitherto recorded—and mean to abide there some time! Mrs. and Mr. Fairbairn are in town with the young ladies.

Now I must turn to my "Edinburgh" reviewing and fill up page 4 to-morrow. Good-night.

JULY 18

We have had no overpowering heat, though it has been a most genial summer, and the country looks beautifully and promises abundance. If your lawn looks like "green stubble," it looks no worse than mine at Mattishall, although mine, when I left it, ten years ago, was as fine and smooth as a card-cloth. There be two sorts of tenants: one which damages the landlord, and this sort hitherto has fallen to my lot: and the other which improves the landlord's premises, one of which I am sorry to say that I am. Between the two I am not a considerable gainer. I sent word to Mrs. Sartoris that I should post my letter to-day and would enclose in it any message or messages she might trust me with. Hearing nothing in reply I incline to think her not in town. I do not pay *this* time as I observe you paid yours, and remember our compact. But my first letter seemed to me so worthless that I could not resist putting a stamp upon it. And now, my dear friend, farewell. Do not forget me, for I very,

very often think of you; and write to me when you can, for your letters are the only consolation I have for the loss of your company. May God bless you now and ever: while you are happy, I shall be so too; and if I can in any way serve you here, you will be very unkind if you don't employ me. My mother sends her best love. Remember me to Marie who I am sure takes good care of you.

Ever yours
WM. B. DONNE

As I am possibly your only organ of information, my letter will not be complete without some tidings of your brother and his belongings. Henry[1] goes up to Addiscombe for examination on the 1st of next month: if he passes—and both himself and his father are very sanguine, as the boy is really studious—he will then be able to take up his commission and depart for India forthwith. I have some misgivings about the means for the outfit, as what with paying debts and what with furnishing the house, very little of the £500 is left. Gertrude is in high favour with Garcia, and so I suppose she is likely to do him credit. John has I believe met at last with a publisher for his archæological work, but at present having no prospectuses sent me, I have been unable to exert myself in procuring subscribers. His book about Leibnitz and the Great Electors must soon be out, as I saw nearly the 40th sheet lately at the printers. This is all I know, and most of it is hear-say: for they now live a long way off, and our avocations do not bring us together. I have omitted to tell you that Miss St. Leger called on me a few days ago, and when I reported the good news of you was quite radiant with pleasure. It did me good to see her.

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

12 ST. JAMES SQUARE
SEPTEMBER 4, 1856

The Hart did not desire the water-brooks more than I was beginning to desire the sight of your hand-writing, when

[1] John Kemble's three children were (1) Henry Charles, mentioned in this letter, now living, a retired Colonel of 2nd Bengal Cavalry; (2) Gertrude, married 1859 Charles Santley; and (3) Mildred, married 1861 Charles Edward, eldest son of William Bodham Donne.

your most welcome letter arrived. Not but that you are exemplary as a re-spondent, but I keep bad count, beginning to reckon of hearing from you almost immediately after I have dispatched my own letter. I believe I understand what you intimate, and assuredly there is much sadness in "a hope fulfilled," yet you have the satisfaction of being with your child, and yet more in finding her what you wish, and are laying up, I trust, many occasions of cheerful retrospect for the future. Go where you will you must be loved and admired, and depend upon it nowhere more than in your own land. I am afraid this letter will be little worth your having, for except about myself and my belongings I have really nothing to tell you. Mrs. Sartoris's absence (whither they are gone, I know not) is a great misfortune to me; for, at her house, I had a chance of meeting some of your friends and thus of putting something worth your reading into my letters, whereas now this source of information is dry. About myself and mine therefore—My mother returned last week much the better for her five weeks' ruralising, and apparently glad to be home again. Blanche and Valentia are still in Norfolk, and just now with the Keppels at Lexham; I do not much expect them before the end of the month, and then, in my opinion, they will have done pretty well, since they will have been gadding about ever since June the 21st! They have been very happy, and though I shall be very glad to have them with me again, yet I have not begrudged them a moment of their stay. From Fred we heard this very day, after having waited, at last with some anxiety, for 3 or 4 mails in vain. In May he went up the mountains to a place called Mushallabarà which he describes as wondrously grand and beautiful, and speaks with equal rapture of its "rains and mists". To an Anglo-Indian who for months has been baking at Poonah, to say nothing of baking in regimentals, I suppose nothing can be more refreshing than fogs and showers, though it sounds rather strange to us here so often steeped in them. He seems a busy man. He has the command of two companies, in Java, on punishment-drill; the men having been mutinous, but this punished Fred too since he had to superintend the drilling. Then he is superintendent of the Mess—which in no respect differs from being a

butler, except that the butler receives wages and the superintendent only his ordinary pay. Next he is secretary of a cricket-club and a billiard-club, and has lately been Steward at a Ball given by the Bachelors of the Regt. Finally, and now comes out the family-failing—he is Manager of an Amateur Theatre and principal comedian thereto. And all this seems to agree wonderfully with him, as he declares himself "jolly-well". I spent about a fortnight since a most agreeable day at Cambridge with Charles and Mowbray, who are living there like independent gentlemen—who but they! Both I should add are reading very steadily, but I am sore afraid that although Charles will be ready in December, the church will not be ready for him. Nowhere can I hear of a curacy, and without a curacy Bishops will not lay hands on him or on any one—and as regards Bishops, for a very good reason, since supposing a man cannot live by the Church the Bishop is bound to maintain him. No wonder they obey to the letter St. Paul's advice of "lay hands suddenly on no man". I have had myself next to no holiday at present —to-morrow I am going for a few days to Bideford in N. Devon even to see him whose heretical book was burnt at Oxford some years since—J. A. Froude,[1] and who since has written a very marvellous history showing that Henry VIII. was a patient and amiable man enough, sadly plagued by his wives, and "serving them right". Nevertheless 'tis a very striking book and written in first rate English, neither Carlylish nor Macaulayish nor any-ish but his own. I heard incidentally of Trench this morning. When my informant saw him he was not rising in the Church but in the world, since he was solemnly riding a mule up Mont Blanc. Spedding lingers in Town; occasionally he looks in and perverts my mind by his sophistries. E. FG. is in Suffolk and silent. I have, I surmise, deeply offended him by repaying him some money. I must tell you of a little correspondence of his with certain lawyers. He had to do in the course of his long family suit with a firm called "White and Borrett"—for lawyers respectable people enough. Edward however thought they meant to cozen him and told

[1] *History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada*, 12 vols. 1856-70, by James Anthony Froude, born 1818, died 1894.

them as much, whereupon they threatened him with an action for traducing their good name, on which he replied that he had no concern with their name, and that for aught he cared they might style themselves "Bite and Worrit". He could not have staved off an action more advisedly, such a nickname was quite unproducible in a Court of Justice. I dined in company with Mr. Bartley[1] not long since; he asked much for you, and was much interested in all I told him. He is a very agreeable person and I could not but look upon him with much reverence, both for his worth and for the heavy afflictions that have accompanied his life, and have been so strongly and yet so meekly borne by him. There is only one theatrical exhibition now that at all excites my curiosity. At Astleys they are playing Richard III. on horseback, and the crowning circumstance of the tragedy is the "Death of White Surrey," whose decease is only intimated by the author. I must see it when I come back. Wigan goes on with his abominable burlesque of the Medea. I was condemned to sit it out lately, as I took a guest to the stalls; but although Robson now and then acted the Tragic finely, the whole thing was I thought flat, and I am sure unprofitable. There are the American actors at the Adelphi, who are capital in Irish and Yankee characters, the lady—Mrs. Barney Williams—especially—their dancing an Irish jig really did me good for that night and the next day. The papers, including the "Times," are, somewhat late indeed, thundering at the immorality of "La Traviata". Mr. Lumley retorts that it is no worse than the "Vicar of Wakefield"! oddish notion he must have of morals, criticism and comparison! I wonder if he ever read the "Vicar"? Meanwhile the clergy are reading "La Dame aux C.". I have an urgent letter from a parson now before me, begging for the book by Saturday, that being the day on which, without exception, sermons are written. The heat has not been at Philadelphian pitch in England, yet for three weeks it has been the hottest summer known for many years: we have had since the 15th of August some very heavy rains and the barley has been injured by them; yet there is generally a good harvest

[1] George Bartley born about 1782, died 1858, comedian. Stage Manager of Covent Garden, 1829.

well got in. I like my new tenant at Swaffham very much, though he is a gentleman, he attends to business early and late, and works the farm all the better for having been educated. I could not help contrasting his appointments with those I remember 20 years ago in the same house. Now all is "propre". John waits in livery and madame works worsted; silver forks and very genteel conversation; this in A.D. 1856. But in A.D. 1836 we dined in the kitchen: there was no John, but Polly to wait, with red ribbons and elbows, madame cooked the dinner, the forks were two pronged steel ones and the conversation was not genteel. It is perhaps better as it is—but the fun is all gone. The Wilsons (H. H.)[1] are at Yarmouth: he, I should think, enjoying himself since they occupy Telegraph house, the broilingest lodging in the town. It was rumoured that Miss Cottin and Miss Thackeray were going to Egypt: but Mr. Bartley says that it was not so much as thought of by either of them, and they are now at Windsor. I can tell you nothing of John and his belongings not having seen any of them for weeks. When I called they were from home, and they live a long way off. Miss Honeywell and Milly [Mildred Kemble] are come from Hanover: as soon as I return, I will explore that region of London again, and ought indeed to have done so before I wrote to you, but I have been so busy as to be unable to afford an evening for the expedition. You do not give a very comfortable picture of morals and manners in U. S., but what do you say to the universal adulteration of all we eat and drink in the old country? Dr. Harrak's report is really horrible. It seems that eggs are the only edible not poisoned. He knew that London milk was composed of equal parts of milk, chalk, water and bullocks' brains, that butter was braided with hogs' lard, that bread, like busts, was made of plaster of Paris, and that vermilion—a strong mineral poison—entered largely into the composition of Cayenne and lobster sauce. But he has lately been turning his attention to the dead-meat market and he finds that bullocks generally die of apoplexy, sheep of dropsy, veal is rendered white by dosing the calves with castor oil, and fish are kept—no, are made to look fresh—by a lotion of sulphuric

[1] Horace Hayman Wilson, 1786-1860, Orientalist, Professor of Sanscrit at Oxford, 1832.

acid. One comfort is that my fishmonger is a madman and has not reason enough to freshen his fish. Good-bye—God bless you and yours—remember how welcome your letters are to me and believe me ever yours,

WM. B. DONNE

Remember me to Marie. My mother desires her best love to you. Where does Miss St. Leger live?

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

12 ST. JAMES' SQUARE
OCTOBER 10, 56

As good news cannot be too speedily communicated I write a line to tell you (1) that Trench's boy has obtained a commission in the E. I. Company's service, Bengal Presidency, and (2) that Trench himself is Dean of Westminster, and no mistake this time, though there was about his Bishopric.

I have just seen Mrs. Sartoris, who is looking very well and very handsome. As she is about to write to you I leave her to tell all news about herself and hers, except that her husband is better and children all well—Greville just lodged at Eton.

My belongings are all returned: the girls had a three months' run in the country, paying 8 visits. I have let my house at last, and I hope permanently. For myself I have been very little out of town this summer, enjoying the reflected pleasure that my belongings were happy in the country. My mother came back ten years younger and better for her rural felicity. London, which was unusually full for a few weeks, has been unusually empty since the first week in July. I sit here sometimes for days together without seeing a soul, but a man who has on his hands the compilation of a volume as big as a Church Bible, *viz.*, a classified Catalogue of near 80,000 volumes, does not need many interlopers.

Are you turning your steps to any city for the winter? I am afraid it will not be to London just yet.

Hoping there is a letter for me on its way across the Atlantic, I am

Ever yours
WM. B. DONNE

It may be interesting to quote a statement made in the *Academy and Literature*, 24th January, 1903: "The new catalogue of the London Library is to be issued to subscribers in February. The Library contains something like 220,000 volumes, and the catalogue contains a matter of 2,170,000 words. The actual printing was commenced a year ago, and 8,000 words a day have been submitted in proof. The difficulties of such a task are obvious, but so great a library needs all that can be done in the way of cataloguing."

And again 13th June, 1903, is the following: "The annual report of the Committee of the London Library contains some interesting facts. The total cost of the admirable catalogue issued not long ago was £4,250, but the gross charge to the special catalogue account has been only £3,488 7s. 11d. The sales up to the end of April amounted to £1,361 1s. 10d., and there remain in stock 1,700 copies. The total membership of the library is now 2,912."

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

Nov. 7, 1856

Do you remember the most remarkable of all Madame de Sevigné's remarkable letters—that in which she announces the intended marriage of Mdlle. d'Eu, Mdlle. de Dombes, la Grande Mademoiselle to the Duc de Lauzun? If you have her correspondence at hand, refer to the letter before you read a word more of mine—if you have it not, do your best to recollect the letter, for none but Madame de Sevigné's own words can do justice to the intelligence I am about to give you. It begins, "Je m'en vais vous mander la chose la plus etonnante, la plus surprenante, la plus merveilleuse," etc. And I am going as Harley says in the Vampire "not to astonish you, Madam, but to paralyze you". I am going to affirm what, when rumoured of yore, I have often denied: to contradict my own prophetic soul: to approve in a measure what I have repeatedly averred to be improbable, impossible, absurd, out of the way, out of the question, gossip, humbug, twaddle—in short I am now going to announce not—that I am come into a fortune, nor that Maurice has been burnt in Smithfield, nor that Trench has been hung, instead of the Bell, in the new clock-tower, nor that Mrs. Trench has gone off with the Bishop

of Oxford, nor Mrs. Fairbairn with Charles, nor anything indeed that you can fancy or dream, or have ever expected or longed for—but simply that Edward FitzGerald is at this moment, or in a very few days or hours will be—"Benedick the married man"! He is married or going to be married to Lucy Barton. "Bélier, mon ami, vous me ferez grand plaisir, si vous commencerez par le commencement." Who is "Lucy Barton"?—Lucy is the daughter of Bernard Barton, whilome Banker's clerk and poet at Woodbridge. She is about a year younger than her husband, consequently about 48: and in respect that she is tall and well filled out, Charles is wont to call her Barton-Barton, conceiving, I suppose, that Baden-Baden means double Baden. However, though there be much of her, it is so much good, and as she and Edward have been intimate friends for at least a quarter of a century, and she has great reverence for him, I am not clear though I have been as incredulous as Thomas and as full of denial as Peter, but that both have consulted and concluded wisely. May God bless them both, and this I am sure you will echo from the bottom of your warm heart. . . .

We heard Trench read himself in at the Abbey. His voice, when he has the grace to govern it, is a fine one, and on that occasion he was quite audible even to persons "demi-sourds" like myself. Poor Mrs. Trench is a good deal disconcerted at the prospect of exchanging the pleasant country peace, gardens and green fields for Dean's Yard, Westminster. It is like "putting on the weeds of Dominic" after being accustomed to more handsome apparel. Nor is her dismay lessened after inspection of her future residence. The late Dean (Buckland) was not only a geologist himself: but he brought up his sons and daughters in the love of skeletons and carcasses, and so the house from garret to cellar is full of dead things' bones. I reminded Mrs. T. of Ezekiel's question—"Who shall make these dry bones live?" and of the practical answer to it. But she is far from wishing Ezekiel or any other prophet to ask such questions on her behalf, seeing that these bones belonged in their day to huge lizards, serpents, sloths, and mammoths. Yet if fat sheep tend to make fat children, she may take comfort still; for the sheep that feed in the Cathedral-close are as plump

as the plumpest of the canons; "the mountain sheep may be sweeter, but the churchyard sheep are fatter"—as fat, indeed, as John Forster, already a portly man, is likely to become, now that he has married the bouncing relict of Colborne, the publisher, with copyrights for crinoline. . . .

There has been a sort of winter season opera at Drury Lane; Grisi, Mario and a very respectable troupe performing "Norma," "Lucrezia," etc., to overflowing houses: and H. M. T. opened for a few nights last month with equal success to indulge the "pensive public" once again with their beloved "La Traviata". We went to see the "M. Night's Dream" at the Princess' last week. So far as scenery goes it is mighty pretty, especially the woods and fairy bower by moonlight, for there is some new device by which a silvery light is thrown from above upon the stage, which looks like a green lawn. Harley was a good Bottom: of the rest silence is the best grace of speech: not that they were worse than they would have been at any other theatre. But after *your* Readings, all other Shaksperian performances are to me scarcely endurable. The "Pizarro," which they yoke with the "M. N. D.," went off much better. But I dread going to the Play with young folks. Sit they can and sit they did from 7-12 at night, until I was nearly dead with cramp and weariness. Mrs. Stowe's "Dred"[1] is not so generally popular as her "Uncle Tom" proved, although the judicials, such as Spedding and Crabb Robinson, like it better and applaud it highly. But not even my respect for their opinion will, I think, induce me to read it. The older I grow the greater is my reluctance to form new acquaintance with either beings or books, and if I live long enough, I shall be left a century behind the rest of the world. . . .

12 ST. JAMES' SQUARE,
NOVEMBER 7, 56

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

Nov. 26, 1856

It would have been a very *mean* thing to send you a note only across the Atlantic, had there not been reasons and

[1] *Dred; or, A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp*, by Mrs. Beecher Stowe, pub. 1856.

causes for it. But in the first place I wished to forestall every one in sending you the news of Trench's preferment, and there was barely time to catch the Saturday post; in the next the note was of the postscript-kind sent after a previously despatched letter, like a messenger after a kite. However if evil there were, you have returned good for evil, by sending me instead a letter of just dimensions—most welcome as all your words always are to me. . . .

I doubt whether "the old country" won't flog the new one in greed of gain and the rascality that springs from it. Within eighteen months England has witnessed four of the most villainous and sweeping cases of swindling in any record. Some cases occurred before you left us: but within the last 6 weeks we have had a Mr. R. doing the Crystal Palace Company out of £80,000, and a Mr. X. the G. N. Railway Company out of £140,000. Both these worthies seem to have thought there was much savour in the Parable of the Unjust Steward, since they literally wrote down 50 for 80 or 80 for 50 just as it suited their interests. Both also presumed that so long as they made a good appearance the public would think them honest men, and accordingly Mr. R., with a salary of £150 per annum, lived at the rate of £5,000, and Mr. X., with a salary of £250, lived like the Master of Murphy himself, deeming nothing too dear or too good for him. And so they played their parts.

A. Tennyson and his wife have been in London for a few days; both well: he has purchased the place he hired in the Isle of Wight, and is, I understand, working in good earnest at the "Morte d'Arthur". So far the reception of "Maud" has done him good, as it has shown him that there may be too much of merely lyrical effusions and that a great poet requires a large canvas. Mrs. Browning has been delivered of "Aurora Leigh," *i.e.*, of many hundreds of verses, which I have not read and do not intend to read, not out of disrespect, but simply because I do not understand either her writings or her husband's, and —a sign of age I suppose—require poetry to be some years old before I can relish it. Yes; the London Library *does* contain nearly 80,000 volumes, and I am the luckless wight whose duty it is to sort and give an account of those same. . . .

That fine sample of an old lady, Mrs. Basil Montagu, died lately at her daughter's, aged 84—almost the last survivor I should think of Charles Lamb's friends. Thackeray goes shortly to Edinburgh to repeat the lectures which put so much money in his purse in America. I have not seen him for many months, being unlucky in my calls; indeed he fluctuates a good deal between Paris and London, his daughters spending six months of the year at the former place with their grandmother. Kingsley is in town, and I am soon going to spend a Sunday with him in Hampshire; he is working at a new novel on present times, having strangely come to the conclusion that we are just now living in the best of all possible worlds. I am afraid that such a subject will not suit him as well as "Westward Ho!" did; for I doubt whether he is a very shrewd observer of social *nuances* such as make contemporary stories pleasant. However he will be worth reading, for strength at least must come out of the strong. Should you come across my friend Laurence, who is or was at Boston, remember me most kindly to him. He was doing so well there that Mrs. L. and her children have joined him. Tom Taylor comes to see me to-day; he is engaged on something that requires all our books in any language relating to Flanders and the Flemings, though whether it be a play, a poem, or a tale he has not intimated. He tells me that Wigan is out of danger, but shrunk to his bones. Taylor's colleague, that old man C. Reade,[1] is writing a newspaper novel, justifying himself on the very substantial plea that he is paid for such weekly contribution quadruple of what he would be paid for a just book. He sits watching one, when he calls, with head on one side like a magpie, and deriving seemingly much amusement from the contemplation. He may think of turning me into the "père respectable" of a romance. Long are his calls, long his pauses of silence, during which it is useless to talk to him: he hears or marks you not. Yesterday I ventured to have a dinner party, Froude, Spedding and Parker —it was with some reluctance, for Mary [the old servant] is

[1] Charles Reade, novelist and dramatist, 1814-1884, author of *Masks and Faces* (1852), *It is Never too Late to Mend* (1856), the novel *Cloister on the Hearth* (1861).

very old, and will not admit of any helper; but I found the means of lightening her cumbrance about serving by having a dish or so from M. Epitaux in the Colonnade: and we did mighty well. Spedding discoursed like Socrates himself, maintaining among other miserable paradoxes that the only correct English writer now or formerly, was—Thomas Carlyle! His Bacon will appear in monthly volumes next year. We have had snow already: indeed in the country a good deal which is somewhat early for England and fills me with dread, for snowy weather is the only sort in which existence is really burdensome to me: it irritates me as thunder storms do some people, and the east wind others: it stiffens my joints and makes my skin like parchment: it renders me at once sluggish and irascible and utterly odious. Turner's pictures are now exhibiting at Marlborough House, if indeed being hung in dark narrow rooms be exhibiting. Beheld altogether one sees how great an artist he was. I wish you could see them: some dozen are altogether wondrous. There is a new statue in Trafalgar Square of Gen. Sir Charles Napier the "Hooknosed fellow!" of Scinde, and as a portrait is certainly very good. . . .

Nov. 26, 1856
12 St. James' Square

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

Jan. 20, 1857

. . . The girls are just back from a very pleasant, though a farewell visit to Itchenstoke. I went for them one afternoon and brought them back the next morning and found the house of his very reverence turned topsy-turvy by preparations for Tableaux vivants, which came off that evening. Here Blanche and Valentia did yeomen's service; for, if they learnt nothing else at Brussels, they learnt the art of dressing up and posturing, and transmogrified even the Dean himself into a very stately and handsome Louis XVI., much handsomer indeed than the poor shiftless original can ever have been. He was not guillotined: but he was represented parting with his family. I was promptly pressed into the service: and as soon as I entered the house was informed that I had a scene of "Julius Cæsar" to learn then and

there while I was eating a cold chicken and drinking sherry; this good fare was favorable to my memory, and as regards my part, I was perfect: though as regards my attire, I was "a stranger Pyramus than ere played," since my toga was a crimson dressing-gown with a blanket arranged for a cloak. My partner in this exhibition was a young Oxonian divine, even the Curate of the Parish, who, wrapped in a sheet, and with good household flour on his face, and a laurel crown on his head, did signify the ghost of Cæsar. In the tiring-room I thought we had come to grief, for as soon as he was thus disguised, untimely scruples seized on him, and he asked me whether he looked clerical! I could not say he did; but reminded him that even David danced and Saul disguised himself. Altogether it was a very prosperous evening and the neighbourhood, I hear, is ringing with envy and wonder at the spectacle.

We have lost an excellent friend in Mr. Manning of Diss,[1] whom you may have seen at your Readings, there, and whose portrait hung behind your chair. He died full of years, honour and good name at the age of 86, almost without pain or illness, and in full possession of all his faculties. A kinder or wiser man he does not leave behind him. I never witnessed a more impressive sight than his funeral. Every shop in the town was closed, and every inhabitant of it was either in the Church or accompanied the procession from the Rectory to the Churchyard.

John and his children dined with us on New Year's day, and we were very merry and noisy. His book—the collection of State papers—is much approved of, and he has new subscribers enough to begin printing his work on Sepulchral Antiquities, and has also found a publisher for a second edition of his Anglo-Saxon Charters. Moreover, he is, I believe, engaged with a salary to superintend the archæological department of the Manchester Exposition. It is very good for him to have returned to England, and I hope his prospects will henceforward go on brightening. . . .

[1] William Manning, born 1771. Ninth Wrangler. Dean of Caius College, Cambridge, 1799; Rector of Diss, Norfolk, 1811 to 1857. Married, 28th July, 1812, Elizabeth, daughter of Rev. Wm. Sayer Donne, Rector of Colton, Norfolk. Died 3rd January, 1857.

Spedding has brought out his first volume of Bacon, and it is such a volume as his friends and the world looked for, just, learned, accomplished in all its parts. You are quite right in surmising that I would have ordered another dish from Epitaux for your behoof, and if you will dine with me, I will arrest even Kingsley, and make Epitaux's fortune. One great pleasure in having a house of my own again, instead of this precipice, will be that I shall then have no compunction in asking you to sit at meat with us, but you must do so very often to clear the scores of your hospitality to me and mine; neither do I wish them cleared, for you are one of the very few persons to whom I love to be a debtor. To-morrow the girls and self dine with Arthur [Malkin]. I have sent him "al solito" a Turkey, bigger than his wife, nearly as big as myself. Pray heaven he have not cooked it too soon for I believe it to be a *stag*, and a stag you may keep three weeks, where this has been slain ten days only. Ed. FitzGerald has taken rooms at 24 Portland Terrace for 3 months, much to my delight, for he is within reach, much to his own discomfiture, for the rooms it seems are dark and dismal, looking forward on the wild beasts,[1] looking backward on a cemetery. The paper of his sitting-room is a dark, indeed an invisible green, the windows are narrow, and he says that "his contemporary"—which, being interpreted, means his wife! looks in this chamber of horrors like Lucrezia Borgia. Most extraordinary of Benedicks is our friend. He talks like Bluebeard. Speaks "O' leaping o'er the line": really distresses even Spedding's well-regulated mind. I have however so much confidence in him that I believe all this irony with a rooted regard for Lucy, and so much confidence in Lucy as to believe she'll tame Petruchio, swagger as he list. Yet for the present I agree with your sister. "Your account," quoth she, "of Edward FitzGerald is very droll, but not comfortable I think. At least if I was his wife, I should not like him even to play at being bored by me. I think my woman's *feeling* would revolt at that, and my woman's *folly*, at being called the 'Contemporary'."

Connection of subjects is surely not a virtue of this letter. I meant to have told you in its proper place that E. FitzGerald

[1] In the Zoological Gardens.

dined with me on Christmas Day, and that we drank your health in a bottle of your own claret, and wished you all round every good wish of the season, and a speedy return for our own sakes. Thackeray is making a mint of money by his Lectures on the four Georges. He is paid £50 per lecture, and besides lecturing twice a week at the Mary-le-bone Institute, he goes to Bath, Brighton, Newcastle, and whither not. Blanche and Valentia and myself went on Tuesday evening last to H. Reeve's. Thrice the number of people, beyond the capacity of the rooms, were present, and the consequence was that movement was impossible, and we remained nearly in one place all the evening. To make this absurdity yet more absurd there was dancing! and I saw Blanche figuring away in the Lancers on a space you might cover with a pocket-handkerchief. It was a jammed, crammed, and before I retired to rest, a well *damned* party also. The only comfort I found was discovering on a sideboard an Etruscan vase full of excellent beer, a treasure I communicated to John Kemble and Frederic Barwell, who like myself were nearly exhausted with bumpings and thirst. I am still rather lame from the descent of a weighty widow on my left foot, and I am not, sure that my ribs are quite as they were on Tuesday morning. . . .

JANUARY 20, 1857
12 ST. JAMES' SQUARE

On the death of John Mitchell Kemble, 26th March, 1857 William Bodham Donne was appointed Examiner of Plays.

The next month, *i.e.*, 25th April, 1857, there appeared the following in *Punch*[1]:—

"A respected correspondent writes to us to say that ever since the appointment of the amiable gentleman and excellent scholar, now Censor of Plays—he, our correspondent, has been hammering at a joke, which is to bring in the names of that gentleman, an admirable actress at the Lyceum [Miss Woolgar] and two rivers in Russia. He has not quite done it. But thinks he could make it out if we would give him a little more time. He may have as much as he pleases, but we dare say we could knock it off for him at once.

"*Ques.* If the best Actress at the Lyceum liked a farce, why must the Manager make a long journey to get it licensed?

[1] By kind permission of the Proprietors of *Punch*.

"*Ans.* Because he would have to go from the Dnieper to the Vistula: certainly not—sold again! Because he would have to go from the Woolga' [Volga] to the Donne [Don]."

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

JUNE 5, 1857

. . . Thackeray has just completed his lecturing and netted no small sum thereby. He told me with great pleasure, the other day, that at last he was worth a clear £500 a year, and had just signed an agreement with his Publisher for a new novel in monthly numbers, for which he is to be paid £300 per number! I remember the time when his copy per sheet was worth no more than mine, *viz.*, from 10 to 16 guineas, but he was born with brains, and while I retain my original value, he has just twenty-folded his worth. However I do not grumble, as my pen has, from first to last, served me well, and I hope for a few years to come will continue to do so. Fitzgerald [*sic*] has rejoined his better-half, and John Fitzgerald [*sic*] just hired a sixth house—less than half-a-dozen will not serve him to occupy at once. . . .

12 ST. JAMES' SQUARE
JUNE 5, 1857

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

JULY 5, 1857

. . . My own house at Mattishall is well cared for, the gardens have received a cultivated aspect and the plantations are very thriving and pretty. In the autumn I shall go down again and cut down every other tree in order that the standards may thrive better and look yet prettier next year. . . .

I have had lately a very cheerful note from E. FG., he finds some people to his liking at Gorlestone, folks who dine at one and don't object to early teas or old clothes: moreover his nieces have been staying with him who, as he improperly says, "are, since his marriage, his chief comfort". I do not know who wrote "School Days at Rugby";[1] Mrs. Stanley told me it

[1] *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, by Thomas Hughes, born 1822, died 1896, was published anonymously in 1857.

was a most faithful picture of school-life there. I must read it directly, for I am very highly gratified at your supposition that I *might* have been the author of such a "jewel of a book". By the way I am not very far at Walton from Winchfield—another station on the S.W. Line—and near Winchfield at Eversley Rectory dwells Charles Kingsley—perhaps if I duly cultivate his acquaintance, you may, after all, meet him under my roof! His brother-in-law Froude is working up his winter-collections at the State-Paper Office into two more vindicatory volumes of Henry VIII. The Trenches I have hardly seen, not because I am ashamed to go, but because winding up and packing up have nearly engrossed my whole leisure. The Dean finds his leisure for writing much curtailed, now that he is not only compelled to give more time to spiritual matters, but also enforced to discharge such secular duties as dining with the Lord Mayor, and "swarreying" with Lord Palmerston.

I hope to crow over him soon with my books, for he crowed unmercifully over me, while I was the bondsman of the Reading Public.

. . . . . .

Yrs.
W. B. DONNE

When Mr. Donne became Examiner of Plays he resigned the Librarianship of the London Library, and took a house, first at Walton-on-Thames, then at Blackheath, where the family remained until the death of old Mrs. Donne in 1859, when the final move was made to 40 (afterwards 25) Weymouth Street, Portland Place.

W. B. Donne to J. W. Blakesley

LONDON LIBRARY
AUGUST 19, 1857

MY DEAR BLAKESLEY,

After your kind offer to introduce me I feel bound to tell you that I have been this evening to tea with Mr. Rogers, *auspice* Crabb Robinson.

Whether the nonagenarian was in specially good cue, I cannot tell, having no means at present of comparing one of his

moods with another. But I came away charmed with him. There is a dignity and a pathos about him which is very touching. I had rather looked for a Mephistopheles of 90. But there is no truth in this world. "On me l'a dit."

It was very curious to hear "The Task" spoken of as almost a contemporary poem. Mr. Rogers has invited me to breakfast with him on Sunday week. Perhaps we may one day meet there.

Yr. affect. friend
W. B. DONNE

W. B. Donne to R. C. Trench

9 THE GROVE
BLACKHEATH
JUNE 17, 1858

MY DEAR TRENCH,

We had a letter from Frederick [1] yesterday. He describes the attack of the Fort very vividly, and though he admits of having received two shrewd cuts on the left arm and just above the elbow of that arm, makes light of his wounds, and appeals to the good spirits in which he writes as a token that he is not much hurt. However this morning Mrs. Newport, the mother of the brave fellow that was cut down beside Fred, has enclosed to me letters from Sir Hugh Rose, Col. Liddell, and Major Gall, from which it is plain that Frederick is severely but thank God not dangerously wounded and that his and Newport's conduct is looked upon as remarkably gallant. Major Gall says that he never saw anything pluckier than the way they dashed in, and fought against tremendous odds, and that the regiment has lost for a time "two of its best and bravest officers". The wounded pair were doing well at Ghanzi when the mail was made up, and Fred speaks of the luxury of being under the shadow of canvas and in a recumbent posture after the toil of the summer campaign. Unless he recovers too quickly he will probably be sent down to Bombay and so be exempt for a time

[1] Major Frederick Clench Donne, third son of W. B. Donne, was born 9th November, 1834. He was wounded in the Indian Mutiny (see this and next letter). He died in 1875 and was buried at Shooter's Hill Cemetery, Blackheath.

from the dangers of battle and the sun. He had just before he was wounded been put on the staff: this however is only suspended, and his wound will not be unfavourable to his promotion eventually, so we rejoice with trembling and are desirous to be most thankful for his escape from worse and for the credit he has done his name.

With many thanks for kind inquiries,

Affect. yours
W. B. DONNE

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

THE GROVE
BLACKHEATH
JUNE 25, 1858

. . . I enclose a letter from Fred. You will grieve to hear that he has been severely wounded, but rejoice that he has gained himself great credit as a good and gallant soldier. Little of this appears on the slip of newspaper: but after receiving the letter from Fred we got others from Sir Hugh Rose, Col. Liddell and Major Gall all mentioning in high terms of praise "Donne and Newport". They seem, indeed, to have led a sort of forlorn hope. After getting in front of the gate which they blew up, and after blowing it up, the prospect before them was a narrow passage turning off at a sharp curve. Major Gall describes the rush made by these two lads as one of the most gallant things ever witnessed. As soon as they were past the gate-way they were surrounded by the enemy, and Major G. says he saw Donne and Newport cutting away at about six black fellows apiece. He laments their temporary loss for active service as "the loss of two of the best and bravest officers in the force". A Lieutenant Armstrong, who was also engaged and temporarily blinded by a stone, writes, "on partly regaining my sight and consciousness I saw Donne and Newport come thundering up the passage surrounded by swords and bayonets and cutting clean through them all". Sir Hugh Rose's letter was to say that he had received the report of their gallantry and conduct and should certainly report it to the Commander in Chief. . . .

Edward Fitzgerald.

I spent about a fortnight ago two extremely pleasant days at the Lodge, Old Windsor. The party consisted of the Malkins, Captain Aidé (I think that's the way to spell his name), Mrs. Sartoris and your humble servant. We went to Ascot on the Cup-day, and a very pretty sight it is, not so much the race, for which and the like, none of the party greatly cared, but the "ensemble," the company, the course, and such gangs of handsome gipsies as I have not seen for many a year. Our fortunes were told over and over again for nothing, though I for one protested that my fortune was over long back: howbeit I did give sixpence for luck at last, for an old crone, turning savagely upon me and saying, "You'll never marry again and never die in debt" (which being interpreted meant, I suspect, "you are too ugly and too mean to win or to spend"), I put sixpence into her palm, saying that it was the reward of truth. . . .

I sent you a "Times" containing an account of New Covent Garden Theatre. It is a very beautiful building, and though so much larger, is much more like the old *acting* Theatre than was the altered Opera House. I have officially inspected the building twice—*i.e.*, the parts not meeting the public eye: and it is a marvellous Work for space, solidity, ventilation and comfort of every kind, the more marvellous for having been begun on the 20th of October last, and completed by the 12th of the following May. I am bound to say that the Contractor for the work (the architect is Mr. Charles Barry) is a Norfolk man—a man whom I well remember in a very humble carpenter's shop at Thorpe, near Norwich, who in those days would have gladly taken his five or his ten guineas for planning farm-premises, but who now was able to give a Bond for £10,000, to be paid in case he did not complete his job by the time specified in his contract. Mdme. Ristori is in London at the St. James' Theatre, but not doing by any means well. This is owing partly to the hot weather, partly to her being, both in London and at Paris, less attractive than Rachel. Ed. FitzGerald is rusticating in Norfolk at his brother-in-law's, Mr. Kerrich's—his better-half is dangerously near him, having gone Eastward too. He has been jaunting about a good deal of late, and looks all the better for

change of scene and celibacy. Has the fame of Mr. Buckle's[1] work on Civilisation reached you? It is worth the reading, and is generally worthy of its fame. It is very heterodox, very paradoxical, very learned: but its greatest merits, in my opinion, are (1) the style, (2) that it is an excellent resumé of much that was previously known and scattered about. How long he means to live, or where Mr. B. means to go to, I cannot conceive: for his book, though it weighs 3 lb. and ½ and contains upwards of 800 pages, is only Introductory, and whereas he intends writing a "History of Civilisation," this is only the Preface to a "History of Civilisation in England" alone! However everybody reads or at least talks of it, and though published about five months ago it has gone already to the second edition. I have met him once or twice: he improves slightly on acquaintance: but has these two inferior advantages, *viz.*, that he talks incessantly and shrieks like a pea-hen.

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

JULY 8, 1858

. . . I did go to Norwich. But in fact I merely alighted in that city, gave my vote, and returned by next train. I thought that it would be well to spare the heat and noise of Norwich during an election, so I went down on the previous evening to Ely, and wandered about, by moonlight, the Cathedral and its precincts, and was amply repaid by its glorious beauty and deep calm. "They dreamt not of a perishable home who thus could build."

On the 20th Mowbray and myself are going to a fête at the Lodge, Windsor, where Gertrude is to sing, and your sister [Mrs. Sartoris] to act and all sorts of nice things in prospect.

Madame Ristori is to play Jiuditta in a few evenings: but to please the thick-skulled superstitious British public I have been obliged to find her a new name for the Tragedy, and new titles for the characters, and all because the book of Judith happens to be bound up with the Bible, being all the while as much

[1] Henry Thomas Buckle, 1821-1862. First volume of *History of Civilisation*, 1857; second volume, 1861. Died at Damascus.

inspired as "Tom Jones". When shall we be a wiser people? I am afraid her season has been a very unsatisfactory one. Though the Houses are sitting, many families have fled from the heat and the odours of the river, and Ristori does not strike the fancy of the many as Rachel did. . . .

THE GROVE, BLACKHEATH, KENT
JULY 8, 1858

PS.— . . . The Thames is so pestilential that Hon. Members are fain to speak, holding their noses, and many of them are laid up with sickness so they purpose closing the session. The Lord Chief Justice shut up his Court lately, as neither his Lordship, the jury nor the Bar could stand the odour; and we only want a Bishop to catch the typhus fever to persuade the public that the river needs scouring. It is to be hoped that one at least of those holy men will die for his country's good, or next year we shall be lying all like frogs at the edge of a dry-pond, gasping, on our backs. . . .

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

JULY 31ST, 1858

. . . I might be dead and buried for any trouble the Theatres give me, or for any fees they pay for new pieces, never within my recollection was there such a dearth in the land. Four or five are either being pulled down, in order to be enlarged, or cleaned, painted and decorated. The others play pieces licensed when George IV. was King. "Merchant of Venice" beautifully adorned at the Princess's; unbeautifully acted. And when we have a great artist, we don't go and see her. Madame Ristori played to half-filled benches, and seldom got more applause than I have heard awarded to Mr. Dibdin. But though I get no money, I do get drink from the Theatres: for praise be blest, two of the Saloon-Managers are also vintners, and one sends me a case of red wine, and the other of white. For what cause the 'mighty knows, since I have been no more civil to them than to others.

THE GROVE, BLACKHEATH
JULY 31, 1858

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

SEPT. 9, 1858

. . . The stage has lost one of its oldest inhabitants and most agreeable in Harley.[1] He played Lancelot Gobbo last Friday week with as much force as ever; but he had scarcely reached the green-room when he fell down paralyzed, and, with the exception of the words "I have an exposition to sleep" (so the tale goes), never spoke again. He had never had a day's serious illness, and he departed within a few hours after his seizure without pain or struggle. He was a good and amiable man, so we have no right to say "*poor* Harley"—though I am sorry to add, on his surviving sister's account, that he died poor, and that she, an invalid for many years, was wholly dependent on him. At one time he had made by his profession several thousand pounds (people say £20,000), but at another time he speculated on railways, and lost it nearly all. Far as my stage-memory goes back (and it is a pretty long and strong one) I recollect Harley, and to the last he always amused me. Latterly I knew him; and therefore, on both accounts, shall something miss him. . . .

I have been to Ireland to fetch home my stray sheep Blanche and Valentia, who have been staying in the neighbourhood of Belfast since 10th of June and until the 18th of August. I went over simply to bring them back, and including the journey to and fro, I remained out a whole week. A comfortable people are the Irish: they drove me about all day, or found me a good horse to ride, and in the evening I read to them Shakespeare or Tennyson. So I was sorry to leave them, more particularly as my jaunt gave me a new start in health and spirits. And though I have not yet been to Scotland, I am going on or after the 20th of this month: rather late, but unavoidably so, as the Lord Chamberlain cannot spare me before. I am fallen on evil times: I am paid no more, indeed rather less, than my predecessors in the Examinership, but I am set to do as much work as the whole series, since there was a

[1] Harley, the actor, 1786-1858, at Covent Garden with Macready and Mdlle. Vestris, 1838-1840; excelled in the rôle of Shakespearian clowns.

censor, ever performed. I descend into the bowels of the earth: I mount upon such pinnacles as Satan stands on in "Paradise Regained": I inhale evil smells: I cross dangerous places: "sometimes I fall into the water and sometimes into the fire," and all for £500 a year, besides injuring my mind by reading nonsense and perilling my soul by reading wickedness. And the "Household Words" must take up the parable against me and maintain me to be "a superannuated spectre!" I wish the editor or author could be enforced to follow me up or down some of the ladders and staircases I have recently trodden, and that I were before him in one case or behind him in the other: wouldn't I fall by accident? . . .

I met Thackeray in Trafalgar Square the other day: he, like myself, is *press*-bound, though in far different ways. He does not look well or speak happily. E. FG. is rusticating in Norfolk in great ease and comfort, notwithstanding that his moiety—or, as he calls her, "the elder," is also rusticating within a few miles of him. Pleasant but not proper this. The Romillys (E.) are delivered at last from their long and sore trial in poor Mrs. Marcer, who died some three or four months ago. No people ever performed a duty more bravely. Old W . . . L . . . has been in a most awful scrape at Bath. He has been prosecuted for a most outrageous libel on some, I believe, very harmless people, and has to pay them the exact sum which Falstaff borrowed of Justice Shallow, over and above his costs. It is sad to see an old and an extraordinary man so demeaning himself.

9 THE GROVE, BLACKHEATH
SEPTEMBER 9, 58

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

SEPT. 14, 1858

. . . The growing bigotry of the middle classes in this country is something frightful. In this day's paper I read that Mr. Alfred Wigan who now lives at Brighton, lately placed his son, a boy of nine years old, at a school in that town. A few days after the lad had been in the school, his master

brings him back saying that as the son of an actor he cannot think of keeping him in his establishment! Colchester did pretty well, but not so well as Brighton, about two years ago. The Literary Institution there turned "Fraser's Magazine" out of its library *because* F. D. Maurice wrote for it. Now here was a lie with a circumstance. For Maurice never wrote for "Fraser". I have a portentously wise godson among Blakesley's family at Ware. He had quarrelled with his aunt, an aged spinster, and had been reading, contemporaneously with the quarrel, that fable of Æsop's of the old woman and the empty wine cask. Desirous of being reconciled to his aunt, and his memory fraught with Æsop, he clasps her in his arms and says, "since the dregs are so sweet, what must the liquor have been?" I shall be glad when this youth is confirmed and off the sponsorial hands.

I met an old acquaintance lately, a gamekeeper, who was much enamoured in '56 of a very pretty rustic lass. He married her in '57—and when I saw him, I naturally congratulated him on the accomplishment of his wishes. But John in '58 wore rather a long face when matrimony was on the tapis. He said, "It is very strange how fond I was of that woman: I could have eat her"—adding, after a pause—"and I wish, to God, I had". . . . Are you fond of history? Then I will tell you on the best authority that our Sovereign Lady requires for her morning toilet, 6 dozen towels; 8 tumbler-glasses for her teeth; and two sheets for her bath: item, six and twenty "bougies de cire" for her apartment at night.—"I hope, here be facts."

9 THE GROVE, BLACKHEATH
SEPT. 14, 1858

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am always sure of your sympathy in any happiness of mine, and, therefore, though I have written so lately, send you a line to say that our dear Fred arrived this afternoon from Bombay with 18 months' leave of absence. He is in good health, though his wounds look ugly, and his left arm is a mere appen-

dage to the shoulder. He is grown very handsome, and wears a beard that might become the father of the faithful. He made so light of his wounds that I had no idea, till he threw his shirt off, that he had, like St. Francis, been wounded in 5 places, and ghastly cuts they look still, although cicatrised. On his shoulder you might put your fist into the scar. . . .

A remarkable advertisement in this day's "Times"

"A WIDOW WANTS WASHING"

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

Nov. 10, 1858

. . . I made the Malkins a visit, which, if it were as agreeable to them, as it was to myself, was a most successful one. I could not go to Corrybrough indeed like an ordinary man or a Christian at the proper time—August or September, for I was occupied with consideration of Theatres and by articles for three Reviews at once, until the 27th of September, when I left home with a clean slate and conscience. Yet late as it was in the season, and cold also occasionally, I saw the Highlands under some of their features proper to the year's decline and favourable to themselves. The snow was on the mountains for some days before I left Corrybrough—and grim and venerable they looked under their white coverture. But the sun and bright green, even spring verdure, were in the valleys, and the juniper and birch, the larch and fir composed with their mingled summer and autumn colours a most beautiful picture. Malkin soon found that I minded neither the water above nor below, but would wade a stream or breast a shower or a storm with any gilly on his domains. So we went out every day: he with Campbell and his gun: I with a staff—for as Spedding was not there, I declined arming myself—and during an eight-day visit we went to every point within ten miles of his house. Of all the scenes however, that one called *the streams* most captivated me: it combined so much delicate beauty with so much grandeur. I was extremely fortunate in my journey up from Perth to Corrybrough: the day was beautiful and Killiecrankie could not have been seen more favourably at any season. I returned by Edin-

burgh, and saw the glorious panorama from Arthur's seat, and studied well that superb city, old and new, at least externally. Next summer if I am permitted, I'll take my girls thither and show them Loch Katrine and the Trossachs. The weather was not good enough for excursions after the 7th of October, so I did not make any deviations on my road homeward. I was out just a fortnight, and was greatly benefited by the excursion. There was no company at Corrybrough, and we needed none, as our evenings were as pleasant to me as the days had been. My only mischance came from Arthur's over-care of me. He was scandalised by the thinness of my boots and made me buy a pair of brogues for better protection, but I never could wear heavy shoes, and accordingly was lamed for several days by those iron-shod inventions. . . .

I suppose you have on your side of the water Carlyle's "Frederick the Great". It is sold out already here. I have not read it, but am among the very few who have not. I am no particular admirer of the historian generally, nor do I care so much for his present hero, as I did for Cromwell. My experience of the social qualities of actors coincides very nearly with your own. I have rarely found them good company, except in the way of professional anecdotes, which soon pall on the taste. Bartley was an exception. He was a well-read man, who had much to say on various matters. But I fancy musicians are little better: and there seems a common cause for the general dulness of both out of their respective callings. Their talents and acquisitive faculties are absorbed by their pursuits and evolved instead of being drawn inward. Neither is there much leisure for cultivating any but their professional gifts: for what with rehearsals and what with performances, an actor in full work is usually employed eight or ten hours out of the twenty-four.

9 The Grove, Blackheath
November 10, 1858

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

JAN. 10, 1859

. . . We find Blackheath, though almost suburban, at an inconvenient distance from London, especially as my work does not, like that of my predecessors, come all home to me, but demands my frequent attendance in London. *The Inspector of Theatres* is a very different employé from the *Examiner of Plays*, and the necessity of going to Town at least, twice a week, often thrice or four times, adds considerably to my rent, and besides that there is the carriage to pay on parcels, which, were I in town, would be delivered by hand, and many other minutiæ which in the year come to somewhat. Mowbray too now travels daily to and fro: instead of walking to his office as he would do if we lived near Manchester or Hyde Park Squares. One advantage we certainly imperil. Life may be endured at Blackheath, with Greenwich Park at hand, all the summer. Not so in London, after August has once set in. Yet my girls hitherto have always managed to be away even from Blackheath in the hot months, and so this disadvantage in London may prove unreal. In other respects they will be gainers, as nearly all Blackheath society is imported from London, and when they go to Concerts or Theatres, it is a nuisance to be hurried off, to catch the 11.5 train. Finally my theatrical business demands an Office, and though the Lord Chamberlain ought to find me one in St. James' Palace, he won't or can't, because the Duchess of Cambridge occupies the best rooms in that ancient but inconvenient building. So you must come to see us here in June, and in August will, I hope, find us near enough to see us many times. You will marvel why I lay such stress on my "theatrical business," but the fact is the post is converted after the depraved fashion of the day into a reality, and now if a drunken fellow fall out of the gallery into the pit, I am taken to account for it. Assuredly the lines of my predecessors were set in pleasant places. . . .

A sad gap has been made in the list of my near friends in Norfolk by the death, suddenly, of Mr. Keppel, of Lexham. He was one of the finest specimens of an English country gentleman

I have ever seen, performing all his practical duties on his own estate faithfully; an excellent magistrate, a good landlord and a friend to all his servants and labourers. Withal he was a well-informed man and had in his humour a spice of Falstaff's vein, resembling also the fat Knight in his size. I shall not replace, and shall sorely miss him when I go thitherward. But these evening shadows come on people turned of fifty: and it is a great comfort to me to know that you are much younger and stronger than I am.

9 GROVE, BLACKHEATH
JANUARY 10TH, 1859

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

MARCH 18, 1859

. . . When I mentioned little Harry[1] as much grown—and nothing more—I had seen him for five minutes only at his dinner at Eaton Place. But your surmise that I *could* say nothing more is injurious to the lad. He has since been to visit us, and he is still the same winning and attractive child he always was: to-morrow I fetch him to dine with us. He is well spoken of by both Mr. and Mrs. Smithers, and seems very happy with them. I think, after my three or four disappointments, that I have placed him luckily at last. His wits are keen, and it behoves one to be careful what is said in his hearing, as he treasures it up, and improves indiscretions of speech to his own uses. This is not the result of my own experience: but I understand that he managed to set Mr. Harness's Curate and Mr. and Mrs. Hogg by the ears, by confiding to the Curate's ears some remarks that were not meant to reach them. He did this in a very solemn and business-like way—going after service into the vestry, and requesting the minister to walk with him, whereupon in friendly colloquy he imparted that either Mr. or Mrs. H. thought him (the Curate) an owl, or something like it. . . .

[1] This must be Harry Kemble, the actor, not to be confounded with Henry Charles Kemble, his first cousin, who was in India. Harry Kemble is the son of Charles Kemble's youngest son Henry.

Edward FitzGerald left us yesterday; since he gave up his lodgings in Gt. Portland St. he has taken a room at the Green-man, over the way, and given his days to us. He is now gone on a visit of three or four days to his "elder," *alias* "contemporary," *alias* Mrs. E. FG. It so happens that his brother John's wife resides in the same part of Kent with his (Edward's) elder, preferring, it seems, the charge of a lunatic to abiding with her husband! There is another lady in the same neighbourhood dwelling under somewhat similar circumstances: in short, our friend describes the locality "as a kind of park, where elders are turned out to graze". Here is a herd for the melancholy Jaques to moralize on!

9 THE GROVE, BLACKHEATH
MARCH 18, 1859

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

NOV. 20, 1859

I have been going to and fro almost daily to Windsor Castle, or otherwise employed on errands therewith connected. For the Queen conveyed to me through Sir Charles Phipps such an unmistakable hint that I should manage her Theatre that there was no possibility of drawing back, and so I am in for a load of most unlooked-for responsibility and care. I cannot conceive who put it into H.M.'s head. The first performance is on Wednesday next, and we are quite ready for it already: for I do not ever let the grass grow under my feet, when I take a thing in hand. My first step was to secure the services of Kean's late acting-manager, and having done so, and given him minute instructions, I, in fact, have now little more to do than to see them carried out. There is to be a great supper to the performers on Wednesday after the curtain drops, at which I am expected to preside. I hope I shall not fare like Belshazzar, for I suspect some of *my* lords and ladies are not more godly than were that heathen potentate's. The nearest approach to royalty I have yet made is an interview with Prince Albert, who was very courteous and good-natured in his demeanour to me. I heard this morning at Crabb Robinson's breakfast-table some

most interesting particulars about that poor Mr. Brown.[1] His address to the court, read to me out of an American newspaper, seemed one of the manliest and most touching speeches I ever met with. I suppose that the Normans in England committed of yore crimes as deep as those of the Southern slaveholders in this instance: but they sound grim thus near at hand. . . . Mr. Kingsley[2] has been treated with great (and most deserved) distinction by Majesty. He preached at Windsor on Sunday last, dined of course at the general table: but afterwards was sent for to the private drawing-room and complimented, right and left, about his books, the Princess of Prussia told him that she had read them all over and over again. Kingsley is an honest man, and this praise won't turn his head the fraction of an inch. Time has written some furrows of late on his brow. . . .

I have changed my religion, that is to say, I now mostly go either to the High church in Margaret Street, where they come as near papistry as they durst, or to the Unitarian Chapel in Little Portland St. The advantages of the former are in the afternoon that there is no sermon, and that whoso list, may leave the Church at any moment; the recommendation to the latter that the preachers—Martineau[3] and J. J. Tayler—are most admirable, and that the service is a reasonable adaptation of that of our Common Prayer Book. Martineau is the man of genius: but I prefer Tayler for his simple earnestness. . . .

40 WEYMOUTH STREET, PORTLAND PLACE
NOVEMBER 20, 1859

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

DEC. 20, 1859

. . . This letter is two posts later than I intended, but you must pardon a man perplexed in the extreme with changes of purpose at headquarters, the Queen exercising the full

[1] Mr. Brown is John Brown, the fanatic martyr.

[2] Rev. Charles Kingsley, 1819-1875, Rector of Eversley, 1844; Lecturer on English Literature at Queen's College, London, 1848-1849; Canon of Westminster, 1873; author of *Westward Ho!* (1855), etc.

[3] James Martineau, Unitarian divine, 1805-1900. Ordained 1828. Colleague with John James Tayler (1797-1869), of Little Portland Chapel, London, 1859.

privilege of her sex and station in altering her will and pleasure —and with a shower of extravaganzas and pantomimes incident to this season of the year. I send you two titles of performances, as you may have American friends liking to see how her Britannic Majesty disports herself. Now for such scraps of news as I have. Mrs. Sartoris was at Eaton Place about ten days since: dined with and accompanied me to the Olympic. She was looking remarkably well. She has however a traitorous design against the comfort of her friends—*viz.*, to give up the house in Eaton Place and to take casual chambers in London! is it not monstrous for the very pleasantest house in London to be closed? Not that in my heart I blame her, for could I do so I would show the Town a clean pair of heels in double-quick time and go whither rumours of "unsuccessful or successful plays" might "never reach me more". But the case is not indentical. Your sister is a social benefit. I am not: the loss in one case would touch nobody, in the other affects many persons. Leighton[1] has just despatched to Paris a most beautiful portrait of a Roman woman—better by far than anything to be seen in the last Exhibition. I go now and then to his Studio, as he assures me that I am no hindrance to business. This is a great treat to me to watch the progress of his pictures, to see my old acquaintance among them and to turn over his sketches. Laurence has made a most successful portrait of Spedding, and seems to have discovered the secret he has so long been in search of—that of throwing the light on his heads from behind. Whether it be Leonardo's secret or no, it is a wonderful stride in Laurence's own power of painting. There is also an excellent portrait in oils of Aubrey de Vere, and one in crayons of R. M. Milnes [Lord Houghton].[2] H. Chorley[3] fell down in the street lately, not hurting himself; but the crowd which instantaneously gathers when anything like that befalls, averred, some that he was drunk, others that he was mad, and as Chorley was seized with an uncontrollable fit of laughter and also thought good to ad-

[1] Sir Frederick Leighton (Baron Leighton of Stretton), 1830-1896, painter. President of Royal Academy.

[2] Lord Houghton. See note 1, page 6.

[3] Henry Chorley, 1808-1872, critic. Contributed musical criticisms to the *Athenæum*, 1838-1868; *Memoir on Music*, 1841-1862.

dress the spectators, the two parties went away in the conviction that their respective theories, either or both, were true. . . . Your account of American Politics is a very melancholy one. "O liberty what crimes are done under thy name." It is a sad fact that the world was never happier than it was under five despots—the five good emperors of Rome. But then they were *good*, but there was no security for a continuation of the breed. Next came Commodus. Here lies the superiority of turbulent freedom, that it affords a chance of amelioration for mankind; could an Augustus be made certain, I would always choose a Cæsar in place of a Senate, a Senate in place of a people. We have a bad story to tell in England. Every fresh election brings to light increasing corruption and consequently deteriorates the character of the House of Commons. If buying and bribing cannot be stayed, in another half century none but very rich men will be able to secure seats in the Lower House, and the evils of government by the purse were displayed in the corruption and fall of the Roman Commonwealth. This dry speculation reminds me of a long conversation I had in the summer of '57 with John Austin[1] (*the* Sarah Austin's husband). He had been in youth an ultra-democrat, but by much reading and reflection had come round to be a high conservative. Not that Austin was strictly speaking Whig or Tory, but a philosopher who embraced in his capacious mind all history and law. He wrote only one book, "The Elements of Jurisprudence," but that one is unsurpassed in wisdom and concise eloquence. He held only one Brief, and that, discerning that his cause was unsound, he threw up and returned the fee! Now he has ceased to read and think in this world having quitted it a few days ago—one of the great men whom the world could not recognize, because he afforded it no opportunity of knowing him. Bread-winning (and for some years he was very poor) he left to his wife—his brother Charles was made of different stuff—and made in about fifteen years £150,000 by railway. . . .

40 WEYMOUTH STREET, PORTLAND PLACE
DECEMBER 20, 1859

[1] John Austin, 1790-1859, Professor of Jurisprudence in London University, 1826. Published *The Province of Jurisprudence Determined*, 1832.

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

JAN. 20, 1860
40 WEYMOUTH STREET

. . . I have not heard of your sister for some time. In her last note she says that she is particularly gratified to discover that whereas you only *tremble* for my morals now that I have become a Manager, she, when we last encountered in King Street, had serious thoughts of cutting me dead, because she felt assured that I could no longer be a respectable character. I may have a chance of recovering from my degradation after the 31st of this month, and some days before this letter will reach you, for on that evening, much to my relief, the brief season will be o'er for this winter at least. You will see by the Bills enclosed what we have been doing. "The Hunchback" was much admired before the curtain: behind it, I was saying to myself

Oh dear!
Comparing what I've heard with what I hear.

Julia bow-wowed in most singular fashion. Modus did not know his part, and being a deaf-mute, could not be prompted. The only performer good for sixpence was Miss Swanborough who is very pretty, graceful and lady-like. . . .

My days are pretty well occupied with the Queen's errands. To-morrow for example I must go early to Chelsea to see Charles Mathews—then to the Lyceum Theatre to arrange with my acting-manager—then to Windsor to report progress, and expect by night time to be pretty well tired. Royalty gives such short notice that we are driven up into a corner: and when *in* the corner, the wind changes, and a new play must be put on. Here is judgment on earth for what you account one of my besetting sins!—I was among the spectators of Lord Macaulay's funeral in the Abbey. The music was very beautiful and Dean Trench read the service finely for the most part. The procession was boggled: the most interesting part of the spectacle was in the number of literary men who stood by. The grave is between the tombs of Addison and Campbell. Thackeray, M. Milnes, Merivale (Roman historian), C. Dickens, Grote, were among the most notable of those present. . . .

Laurence is once more with Spedding at 60 Lincoln's Inn Fields. I believe he means to try his luck during the next London season, since he was last week looking for a *studio* and a lodging. His portraits of Spedding, Aubrey de Vere, M. Milnes, etc., are now exhibiting at Hogarth's print-shop in the Haymarket, and have, I am told, attracted a fair amount of notice. I think there is a great improvement in his colouring since 1854; his likenesses were always admirable. . . .

40 WEYMOUTH STREET, PORTLAND PLACE
JANUARY 21, 60

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

APRIL 1, 1860

. . . My theatrical management obtained for me pudding as well as praise: imprimis, a silver inkstand from H.M. inscribed "V. R. to W. B. Donne"; secundo, £100 for salary; tertio, direction of the Plays, so long as I am of sound mind; and that there will be Plays in future, under ordinary circumstances, seems likely, since H.M. has charged me to take council with Mr. Grieve, and build her a new Theatre. Here is preferment for a simple Justice of the Peace, who moreover is now a Deputy-Lieutenant of the County of Norfolk, and thereby entitled to appear at Court in scarlet and silver, and crowned with a cock's feather a yard long. "Bless thee, Bottom, thou art translated." . . .

Thackeray's "Cornhill Magazine" is a thriving concern, selling 95,000 numbers per month. Both his story and Trollope's are very good: but my principal attractions to its orange tawny cover is the "Natural History" by G. H. Lewes. Annie Thackeray gave as a reason for her not reading them that "she had been told that everybody knew as much before," whereupon I answered that "everybody was much wiser than I gave them credit for". . . . E. FG. is still in the easternmost parts of England, companying with boatmen, and carrying in his pocket, to ensure a welcome, a bottle of rum and rolls of tobacco. So armed, he spends his evenings under the lee-side of fishing-boats, hearing and telling yarns. . . .

40 WEYMOUTH STREET, PORTLAND PLACE
APRIL 1, 1860

40 WEYMOUTH STREET, PORTLAND PLACE
APRIL 23, 1860

. . . Laurence exhibits six pictures this year: two or three so very good that I hope they will bring grist to his mill. He has just made an excellent crayon-drawing of Miss Malkin [1] who is very like the portraits of Lorenzo de' Medici. Are your American newspapers as full as our English ones of the brutal fight between Heenan and Sayers? [2] I rather rejoice in the savagery, as it may lead to extinction of the "noble science". One only matter the papers have omitted—which inserted might have done some good—the *names* of the noblemen, M.P.'s, poets, orators, and clergymen who are said to have been among the spectators! What a miracle and a rarity is *perfect* health. Sayers, though fearfully punished, appeared two days after the fight in public with scarcely a vestige of his pounding, except his arm in a sling. Perhaps such was the normal state of Adam. Noah doubtless was less healthy since he discovered wine—and wine, tea, and eatables generally, mar nature's intentions sorely. I am in the mood for such reflections: for my stomach has been very troublesome: and now I am my own master I intend to try what starving the brute will do towards making him behave better.

We have had and still have the most villainous weather. N.E. wind with cold rain and fog for variety. No amount of any one of these evils seems to diminish the store for the future. Yet I suppose that London is preferable to country for it is very full. The streets swarm with volunteer uniforms. The fear of invasion has done this good that Mowbray's chest is already expanded by drilling. He looks very well in uniform; drab and silver ornaments.

Tom Taylor [3] is one of the Captains of the Civil Service Corps. Nearly 200 men are enrolled, not counting those who, like myself, pay money for our defence. Meanwhile, Napoleon

[1] Miss Malkin died December, 1903.

[2] Tom Sayers, pugilist, 1826-1865, won the champion's belt, 1857. His last fight was with the American, John C. Heenan (the Benicia Boy), at Farnborough, 1860, the result being declared a draw.

[3] Tom Taylor, 1817-1880, dramatist and editor of *Punch*, 1874-1880; Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, 1842; Professor of English Language and Literature at London University, 1845. Author of several successful plays.

invades the sinews of war by causing us to pay 10d. in the pound for income tax. I think he will arouse the jealousy of the Germans before the year is over, if he is not a little less aggressive on the side of Switzerland; but even then I don't see that we need interfere.

. . . . . .

APRIL 23, SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTHDAY

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

JUNE 10, 1860

. . . I fancy my neighbours in Weymouth Street look on me as some exalted personage—twice, if not thrice, within a few weeks an unmounted dragoon has brought me letters from Buckingham Palace, and though either be clad in scarlet, the inhabitants don't mistake the soldier for the general postman. Then, again, my Deputy Lieutenant's uniform is just such as was worn by the famous Marquis of Granby, or William, the butcher, Duke of Cumberland: and as I have twice issued in that terrible garb from my door, the marvel is increased.

They have made Kingsley Professor of Modern History at Cambridge in place of Sir James Stephen: the University is not much pleased: a man of genius disturbs its repose. Kingsley, however, has well earned the place, and will, I doubt not, make an admirable lecturer. His brother-in-law Froude has just lost his wife—a heavy loss to him. She died on the very day that his last volumes on Edward and Mary were born to the world. His household is to be broken up—his children have fortunately some excellent female relatives to care for them, and Froude himself will settle in or near London. . . .

The Academy this year is generally thought very good: in the portrait department particularly. Laurence exhibits two portraits, J. Spedding and Aubrey de Vere, both admirable. He was much annoyed by the Hanging Committee retaining these two out of six sent by him. But he fared no worse than many other artists, as R. Lane told me beforehand that the Hanging Committee had determined to have a space above and a space below the pictures for the future, and consequently had

to send back an unusual number. Their having done so may have mortified many, but it has greatly improved the effect of the Exhibition generally. Leighton has only one picture this year, a brown Italian scene, just enough to keep his name on the List of Exhibitors, and by no means the best work from his atelier. F. Barwell has got much honour from a sea-piece, and aspiring, I suppose, to more, has been causing me to sit to him in the character of an M.D. coming out of a sick-chamber. . . .

I did not write the paper on Collier in the "Saturday Review," nor, except a notice of Theodore Martin's "Horace," have I written anything for that journal for many months. Younger men deal better with contemporary literature: and jumping from book to book, as weekly reviewers must, is a practice most uncongenial to my taste and habits. I read principally now what most folks have long since forgotten and find my account in it. I have however so far kept pace with the times as to have read the "Mill on the Floss"—one of the most melancholy and powerful books of any day. I hope you have not abandoned the intention of beginning again to write when you ceased to read. We want a Tragedy or two sorely, and some more Lyrics would be very acceptable. I have just been to St. James—no message except kindest love. Mr. C. Greville was there, looking well and very complacent at the result of the recent sale of his yearling thoroughbreds—£3,500 for some score or 25 colts. . . .

40 Weymouth St., Portland Place, W.
June 10, 1860

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

Aug. 9, 1860

. . . Laurence has been very unwell of late and looks very sad: he was to have been my companion here, but a sitter intervened and he thought it undutiful to come. Spedding is also a defaulter, being busy in curing Bacon: so your sister for the nonce is specially unlucky, as she has lost them and got me. Meanwhile she is at this moment talking to the two Miss Bultihls, and they are describing the various modes in which their friends paint themselves, some, it appears, put

a sort of mahogany graining on, others inject their veins with a white fluid, others content themselves with plain red—so much have I learned at the north end of the Westbury drawing-room, they being talking confidentially at the south. This is a pursuit of knowledge without difficulty. I have done one good deed in my life, and that very lately, *viz.*, that, opportunity being put into my hands, I used it so as to make easy and happy for life a most worthy man, who had previously been going from pillar to post, working very hard and reaping very little. I had set my heart on Bernard Bolingbroke Woodward being my successor when I quitted the London Library. He lost by only one vote: and he failed in one or two other objects of quest, subsequently, being evidently reserved for better things. One fine morning in May I got a summons to Buckingham Palace to hear, consult with, and advise with H.R.H. Prince Albert, touching the Windsor Librarianship just vacated by the death of Mr. Glover. So I said what I knew, and what was strictly true (only somewhat under, than over the mark) of Woodward, and in a few days he received his patent—enfeoffing him with £400 a year and a house exempt from all charges. I was so questioned about Library affairs that I began to think the devil was putting his finger in the pie, and the issue would be an order to be no more Examiner of Plays but thenceforward Keeper of books—the effect of which would have been unsatisfactory, as Woodward would not have done for Examiner, however I might have succeeded in my "ancien métier". But it was all for the best—a rarity in this world—and I am very happy at the result. . . .

Frederic Maurice has at length got some preferment, not much worth the having, but nevertheless he has passed the barrier, and probably will rise higher ere long. He is come to a parish in our part of the town—and to a church which you may remember at the bottom of Wimpole St. and at the corner of Wigmore St. We shall resort to him: and I shall have within a circle of a quarter of a mile three such pulpit orators as content me, *viz.*, J. J. Tayler, Martineau, and Maurice, nor will their doctrines be discordant in any material respect, as without concert and in ostensible opposition, all three have weeded their

doctrine of many of the incumbrances of the Church of England. . . .

WESTBURY
AUGUST 9/60

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

SEPT. 28, 1860

. . . I have been two or three excursions since you last heard from me. Firstly, to Yorkshire, where I passed a few days with Monckton Milnes at Frystone Hall—a place you know, and two days more with the Fairbairns at Leeds. You were much talked of by us, and I am charged with their kindest regards. Our party at Milnes included Lady Wm. and Mr. Arthur Russell, "Tom Brown" and his wife, Spedding and other agreeable folks; not the least, perhaps the most pleasant among them being a Mrs. Vivian, whom perchance you are acquainted with. She is somehow a cousin of Lady Fairbairn's. I saw some of the wondrous devices in the iron-works at Leeds, processes which interest and delight me always. The way that a shapeless block of metal is in half an hour converted into a crimson ribband in appearance, for hoop-iron, is marvellous. And then the stolid certainty and seeming satisfaction with which the machinery works, cutting, boring, smoothing, shaving unconsciously, and without any remorse! . . .

We have had quite tropical hurricanes in England, rooting up thousands of noble trees, among others a mulberry tree at Mattishall that was a sapling when George I. succeeded Queen Anne. It may have been planted by Sir Roger L'Estrange (the soil wherein it grew was his), famous for his pamphlets in the days of Bolingbroke and for his translation of Æsop's fables, the old Æsop with the woodcuts and morals at the end of each fable. "What," you will say, "took you to a Musical Festival, you that as regards music have the ears of a bat, not to say of an ass?" Why Blanche was there, and my cousin, who is an aged vestal, had company, and needed a *croupier* at her table, and conversation for her other guests; and Santley[1] sang charm-

[1] Charles Santley, the eminent baritone. He married in 1859 Gertrude Kemble.

ingly both in sacred and profane music, and was greatly admired by the Norwich folk who are no bad judges of his art. Charles was there conspicuous as Rufus, and in high good humour at the reception of his friend. I dined with the Barwells and am again charged with kind regards to you. Louisa Barwell has improved wonderfully in her looks, and is now little short of a handsome young woman, though she will never be so handsome as her mother was. All the dinner party, excepting Mrs. B., Blanche and your humble servant, went to the evening concert: but we three entertained each other very well, and I was better pleased than if I had been listening to the singing men and singing women.

Helps[1] himself is Clerk of the Privy Council, a good appointment for the nation, whatever it may be for him. But an angry man and a vext is H. Reeve, who had for years been expecting that when the crow Bathurst retired that cheese would drop into his mouth. He curses loudly and deeply and daily, for his Mordecai sits in the same house and very close to his gate in Downing Street. Though compelled to exchange papers hourly they do not exchange courtesies, though Helps has been as considerate as Reeve has been the contrary. No more articles in the "Ed. Review" on the historian of the Spanish Conquest: it is lucky that I slipped in two years ago. . . .

The Procters have been abroad, and while Barry was lying sick unto death on deck Mrs. P. sang in his ears the songs in which he celebrates the joys of the sea. Had he written "Gertrude of Wyoming" I suppose she would have scalped him. . . .

40 WEYMOUTH ST., PORTLAND PLACE, W.
SEPTEMBER 28, 1860

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

40 WEYMOUTH ST.
OCT. 27, 1860

. . . Arthur Malkin has come back, after a long ramble in Switzerland. The weather was very unfavourable for ex-

[1] On the retirement of the Honble. W. L. Bathurst, 9th June, 1860, (Sir) Arthur Helps was named Clerk of the Privy Council, a post which he held till his death on 7th March, 1875.

ploring the passes, so he left undone much of what he intended to do, and did some things which he did not intend. Meeting with Dr. and Miss Watson in Switzerland, they drew him on to Florence, where, having left his trunk at Geneva, he arrived with no other change of raiment than a rope and an Alpen-stock, which were meant for other ends than shirts and stockings. He dined with me last Monday, and we—*videlicet*—he, Mrs. M., Miss Billing a guest of mine, and self, went to the Adelphi Theatre, where is now representing a most marvellous play called "The Colleen Bawn,"[1] founded on Griffin's "Collegians". You may have seen it on your side of the Atlantic, since it was extremely popular in U.S. I am in the very Spring-tide of Windsor management, deeming, opining, and devising, and spending my time in journeys to the Castle, or in seeing, hearing and advising with Managers. It is not the worst work, but neither is it the best we can do in this world. . . .

If the Prince of Wales did not come in your way, I presume that you did not go into his. It must have been a fine sight to behold him standing bareheaded and mute beside "Washington's Tomb". . . .

Mrs. Procter is in Weymouth Street, and Miss P. [Adelaide] is being delivered of a second volume of Poems. A. Wigan opens the St. James's Theatre to-night (October 27), with what probabilities of success I know not. He has a Drama of Tom Taylor's to begin with—being the 24th or 25th which that fertile genius has produced in the last 3 years. He has bought a house in Wandsworth, and is paying for it by writing for the Stage from Astley's to Drury Lane. Now and then comes a mishap, but generally his pieces answer well. . . .

OCTOBER 27/60
40 WEYMOUTH St., PORTLAND PLACE

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

DEC. 31, 1860

. . . I have a good mind, and it would serve you right, to fill my paper with speculations on the course of the next

[1] "The Colleen Bawn" by Dion Boucicault, 1866.

Parliamentary Session, the issue of the Peace with China, etc., and to tell you not a word of anything you like to hear. For what have you written to me? not a word about yourself, nor about your married daughter, nor your grandchild, nor my friend Fanny! I am almost tempted to wish that the Blacks would swallow the Whites and then die themselves of indigestion—as Hector McIntyre said of the two sorts of *Phoca*—"d——n them both particularly". . . .

A. Malkin is keeping Yule with the Romillys at Porth Kerry—Spedding being also as usual of the party. Mrs. M. was on her way thither, but at Oxford, being warned, "not in a dream," but by a very wakeful bit of rheumatism, that S. Wales contained no hot (though many cold) vapour baths, she returned to Wimpole Street, and the rheumatism either went on to Wales or remained at Oxford. She murmurs not at this dispensation, though doubtless it was a disappointment, for until yesterday the weather has been extremely severe—often—in some places even 11 degrees—below zero. . . .

I met Mr. H. Greville a few days since in St. James' Street, and if his looks belie him not, one need not wish him better. H. Chorley is going to lecture on music at the Royal Institution. How ruddy he will be under the full blaze of the great gas burner! I hope no nervous person among the audience, perchance awakening from sleep, will cry "Fire". . . .

Her Majesty has again consigned to me the care of her Windsor pleasures: and the results have as yet been very successful. But the means whereby that success was obtained were by no means easy to procure, or when procured to adjust. For every theatre, save one, and that one in Whitechapel, is just now open, and consequently the principal performers, she and he, are much more dispersed than they were last year. We had Daddy Hardacre and B. B. to begin with—the humour of the latter being, that Robson is mistaken for the Benicia Boy on his travels and dreadfully annoyed by people hurrahing at him, feeling his muscles, digging into his ribs, and finally confronting him with a bruiser called "The Game-Chicken"—just for practice. It is not, you may imagine, a very classical drama, but it was a great success. We have a brand new stage and Proscenium

Mail

THE CENSOR'S DREAM

this year: and I suspect shall have ere long a theatre in Windsor, "à la mode de Versailles". We have had two, and are to have 3 more Representations, and I shall not be sorry when the curtain drops on the last, for I bear in mind the instability of human greatness. Tom Taylor is the presiding genius of the Stage. Of our 5 Windsor Plays 3 are his invention: but he has been coming to grief of late—since two of his Dramas proved *fiaschi*, and one was pulled up the hill entirely by the performers, *i.e.*, to say they cut out half of his dialogue and much improved by curtailment the other moiety. The fact is Tom has bought him a house and therewithal a garden at Wandsworth, and he has been writing plays by the dozen to pay for them. In one month Mrs. Taylor told me she wrote down from his dictation ten Acts. I am afraid that Managers will be somewhat shy of him for the next year or two, for Wigan and Mdme. Celeste have each burnt their fingers with his novelties since October. Besides Windsor Theatricals have I not read in the last six weeks 27 Pantomimes and Burlesques and nearly as many Plays? *grist* for the mill: but *grind* also: and perhaps 'tis as well I did not write to you some three weeks ago, for then I was almost as decrepit in intellect as Pantaloon's father must have been.

DECEMBER 31, 1860
40 WEYMOUTH STREET, PORTLAND PLACE, W

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

40 WEYMOUTH ST.
FEB. 7, 1861

. . . So far, now that matters have assumed so grave an aspect on your side of the Atlantic, from being indifferent to the fortunes of U.S. at this crisis, my interest in them is even greater than in the momentous epoch of Italy. It seems to me not only a lamentable event for America, that such mighty development should be arrested by the madness of a fraction of the Union, but a deplorable event for mankind also, that such a grand social experiment as that of Federal Republics should prove a failure. Hitherto society has started with the Nimrod

genus of rulers: when Nimrod became unbearable, has split into many Nimrods, oligarchies, then into aristocracies, and finally either expanded into republics, or condensed itself into absolute monarchies. England and her child North America have alone worked out the problem of freedom with success, though in opposite ways. England proceeded on the old method of having and then curbing kings and nobles: America started free of these aids or encumbrances. Much as I should deplore the destruction of our old and tried institutions by such legislators as Bright, I should not less lament over the ruin of the constitution which Washington inaugurated. Nor would the Union dissolve without heavy loss and partial ruin to England. Is not N. America better to us than all our Colonies? Already, at the prospect of Civil War in the Western Hemisphere, Birmingham is aghast, and Manchester trembling. And when I consider how dear the friends are who would suffer by such possible disintegration, I were not only unwise but inhuman to feel indifference at this crisis. Carlyle, I am told, exults in this disappointment of democracy: but he is no prophet in my eyes, and has nurtured, until it has become a chronic disease with him, his idea of force—in my opinion an idea nearly akin to "the doctrine of devils!" No, my dear friend, I am anything but indifferent to the welfare of the country in which you dwell, and the native land of your children and many of your cherished friends.

I met, a few days since, at Froude's, Motley the Historian: and was charmed with his manner, good sense and high bearing. He gave the company some most striking details about the cause of the present crisis, which, according to him, is merely an occasion for severance, long sought and waited for. He condemned earnestly the pusillanimity of the retiring President, but hoped strongly and cheerfully of the power and good sense of the Northern States. "Were I," he said, "not confident that they would energetically meet the hour, I should not be dining here; my post would be with those who were in arms to resist this Southern treason to the Republic." . . .

I am glad, under the circumstances, that the curtain for this season has finally dropped at Windsor, for ever since October

the Plays and provision for them have kept me in a worry. The Queen changed her mind more than once or twice; some of the principal performers were unavailable or perverse, and though the results, in every case, were even more prosperous than last year, the approaches to them were much more intricate. You will see what we did by the Bills herewith inclosed. Miss Skirrett[1] is within reach, being now at Buckingham Palace, but as she has not sent for me, I am afraid it was more curiosity than affection (No—I have done her injustice; for the ink was not dry, when a letter of affection is brought me by post!) that brought her to my apartment. A. Malkin, since his return from the Alps, has, to my thinking, never been quite what he was before. He over walked himself, and fainted away. I fancy that Mrs. M. knows not of this. Luckily Dr. Watson was with him and brought him round. What I remark in him now is that, whereas for his years, some 5 or 6 beyond my measure, he was the younger of the two in looks and capabilities, now he shows his age in the lines of his face. He says himself that he has done with the Alps and must take to the Pyrenees. She is wonderfully well and sprightly. I had fully purposed to walk over to Old Windsor on the morning after our last performance there on the 31st of January. But I was prevented by a knock on the ankle given me by a careless scene-shifter, which lamed me for the time, and made me prefer passing the morning with my friend Woodward in the Queen's Library. He is a lucky man, and his employers no less lucky people, and I, for that matter, lucky also, since I was the instrument for niching him there. When his eye is tired with books and prints, or his hand with writing, he can refresh them by looking over those three beautiful views, of Eton, the Long Walk, and the Slopes. He stands high in everybody's favour, even in Miss Skirrett's, and as for the younger children of England, they seem to consider him as their lawful playfellow—his predecessor Glover having been feared by them as if he had been an Elisha-bear. I am going, after posting this letter, on a

[1] During W. B. Donne's visits to Windsor he had become acquainted with Miss Skirrett, a lady of great character, whose duty it was to entertain the Manager on the occasion of a Play being performed at Windsor Castle.

melancholy errand, *viz.*, to inquire for poor Dr. Donaldson,[1] who is lying in a hopeless state of paralysis—a great brain gone there. He has been for some months past very dull and silent, and was warned by his medical attendant that his intellect and life depended on perfect quiet for at least twelve months to come. Instead of obeying these commands, he came up about three weeks since to examine the classes at the London University, and fell down before he saw any of the papers. I am very sorry: though not an agreeable man to those who knew him casually, he was one whom his intimate friends highly esteemed —and I was one of several, who, beginning with a kind of dislike, ended by being much attracted to him. During my six years' residence at Bury scarcely a day passed without our meeting: he took me into his literary counsels, and I kept or got him out of sundry scrapes—for he was prone to controversy, and by no means always in the right, or gentle in his manner of handling them. . . .

Mildred has met with a curious adventure. Just before Christmas Day a handsomely bound Bible, accompanied by a note, was sent to her charge on her brother's behalf. The note, not very legibly written, was signed "Mary Anne Thackeray" as she read it, and was forwarded to Henry Kemble in India, though the Bible remained for the present in my keeping. It was no unlikely Christmas gift for a good lady and a ci-devant godmother to make at that season. But a few days ago comes another note more clearly written, signed Mary Anne *Spackman*, inquiring why H. Kemble had not been to drink tea as he had promised on Sunday, and whether he had received the Bible. This aroused curiosity, and Milly called on Mrs. Spackman for the solution of the riddle. It appeared that the impostor, whoever he may be, is well posted up in his story. He knew that Mrs. Santley was Henry Kemble's sister: represented himself, in his assumed character, as having declined going to the East and living with *me!* with other accurate particulars. Mrs. Spackman was at first incredulous, then amazed, especially

[1] John William Donaldson, 1811-1861, philologist. Educated Trinity College, Cambridge. Fellow and Tutor of Trinity College, 1831. Published *New Cratylus*, 1839; *Theatre of the Greeks*. Headmaster of Bury St. Edmunds, 1841-1855. See p. 104.

when informed that the real Simon Pure was a dark Jewish favoured youth, whereas the false one had blue eyes and yellowish hair. Next time he calls, he will have some "interrogatories" put to him hard to answer. . . .

40 WEYMOUTH STREET, PORTLAND PLACE, W.
FEBRUARY 7, 1861

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

MARKET HILL, WOODBRIDGE
FEB. 28 [1861]

MY DEAR OLD DONNE,

Though my letter won't reach you To-morrow, yet I write to you as soon as I can to thank you for yours of this morning.

. . . . . .

I have not been well and we're all growing old: and 'tis time to think of curling oneself up like a Dog about to lie down. Had I worked as you have done, I should have given way years and years ago: but like a selfish Beast, I have kept out of obligations and self-sacrifices. I only say *this* in self-defence: that, if I don't exert myself for other's Good, I don't do so for their harm; and if I keep selfishly to myself, at least don't intrude on others. Enough of all that. It is a very poor Business.

You must take care of yourself: not be always writing Reviews, etc.: and working right and left for every one except yourself.

When fine weather comes, come down here and float on the poor old Deben with me: but don't come while all is dead and dismal, unless to one of the "Mark Tapley" species as F. Tennyson calls me.

Is Borrow's Welsh Book out? I want to see the "Quarterly," where I am told is some account of what is to be in the Book, but I see no Review here.

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

MAY 17, 1861

. . . The most remarkable event in current history, setting aside Garibaldi and the Civil War on your side of the water, is the success of the French actor Fechter on the English Stage. Not only has he drawn around him all whose custom it has been to frequent theatres, but he has attracted to the Princess's hundreds of persons who had not entered a Playhouse, if not the Opera House or the French Comedy, for years. Nay more, the very people who ignored the Drama now haloo Fechter in your ears and steal upon you in your sleep, and teach starlings to echo his name. All ladies are in love with him: Valentia and Mrs. Sartoris included. Madame Fechter is obliged to return to Paris as to a city of refuge: for is it tolerable that Adonis should have a wife? (and Madame F. is not a Venus, but on the contrary a faded Frenchwoman with such rings under her eyes as only Frenchwomen past 30 have). And he goes to Miss Coutts to read Shakespeare to whom think you? to Peers and Countesses and to "Colonels and Captains and Knights at Arms"—yes—but to whom else—to Right Reverend Fathers in God—even to BISHOPS! Poor Charles Kean and his wife have been drinking of the cup of affliction to the very dregs. They have been playing for three weeks at the Standard Theatre—in that picturesque region where the Eastern Counties Railway rears its head—and no one went to see them, and all Kean's friends have been telling him of the Frenchman, and he has outlived all his fame such as it was. I did not even go to the Standard: not out of baseness, but because I find gas-light prejudical to my optics—and moreover that house is as redolent of villainous smells as was ever Falstaff's buck-basket. Neither was I among Kean's comforters: for we exchanged calls but never met: for which I was not sorry, inasmuch as I must, if asked, have told him the unwelcome truth, that Fechter is a great actor: howbeit in Hamlet, he comes not to the mark of either your father or Emile Devrient. In all else he is consummate, *i.e.*, in Ruy Blas and Don Cæsar de Bazan: in the Corsican Brothers I prefer Kean: but *I* is in the minority in that divi-

sion. I trust you will see Fechter with your own eyes and weigh him in your own scales in 1862, for I understand he intends to adopt this country—being more of a prophet in it than he was in Paris. . . . You will be glad to hear that poor John's "Saxons in England" is soon coming to a second edition: but you may not be so glad to hear what follows. Some weeks ago the publishers (Longmans), thinking that I was Executor (which of course, your brother dying intestate, I am not), and informing me that they proposed prefixing to the new edition a sketch of the author's life—"The sketch and the new edition are to be performed by Mr. Vaux of the British Museum"—I went to Pater Noster Row to open the Longmans' eyes—as thus. Birkbeck and myself hold every scrap of paper, *i.e.*, Letters, Journals, etc., out of which such a sketch to be worth anything can be made: they had engaged Mr. Vaux for the task, without saying to any one of your family either by your leave or with your leave, and next to the family, Birkbeck, if not myself, was entitled to some communication on the subject. Moreover there is a chapter of the "Saxons in England" never published, being reserved for volumes 3 and 4, which were never written. I laid all this before these unceremonious gentlemen, but without avail: they were very courteous, but equally firm in declining to alter their plan: and so the book will come out incomplete: for both Birkbeck and myself are resolved not to afford any aid. I proposed writing a short Life, more than a Sketch, and working into it as much as could be extracted from your late brother's journals and papers—that is to say—I offered to do so, subject to your and your sister's approval. There is a fatality attached to his literary career. The "Horæ Ferālis" will and can never be produced, since the Lectures given by John at various Archæological Societies vanished during his last journey to Manchester and Dublin. I knew he had not written a word for the work: but the Lectures would have sufficed to illustrate the Drawings. And so that great store of learning vanished without a record. . . .

I will send with a "Times" or two the last number of the "Saturday Review": the notice of Washington Irving is by your humble servant. The inclosed sketch of Lord Macaulay's his-

torical and literary character is in one respect among the most curious of my writings—it was published in a Low Church and most pious newspaper! the editor of which is a great favourite of mine in spite of the phantoms which he calls faith. That we may not have perfect peace "in this gem of the sea," the "Essays and Reviews" are setting Clergy and lay-men by the ears: and Buckle's second volume (just out) in which, I hear, he has sacrificed Scotch Calvinism, and anointed with vitriol Romanism will doubtless give rise to much healthy provocation. Send us all your old rags from U.S.; to be a rag merchant will henceforth be the high road to fortune: for we have ceased to use Irish for shirting or shifting, and we want more tatters of linen than ever, since Paper is now free, and I saw yesterday devices for making it serve all purposes from that of a shirt collar to a house-top. It is really wonderful in the latter function: it won't leak: it won't break: it won't drown: it will bend into any shape: harbour neither sparrows like thatch, nor bees or fleas like slate or tile: in short, I may live to see Churches built of paste-board: and parsons created out of foolscap. . . .

MAY 17 1861
40 WEYMOUTH STREET, PORTLAND PLACE, W.

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

JUNE 10, 1861

You knew so little of the man that I cannot expect you to understand what a loss I and many of our friends have sustained in J. W. Parker, the Younger. He also published your Christmas book in '55. To his father, the business, and the circle in which he moved, he is irreparable. His funeral was a remarkable sight. He was followed to the grave by Trench, Maurice (who jointly performed the service), Froude, Helps, Kingsley, Hullah, Theodore Martin, etc., etc., to say nothing of less remarkable people, Clarke (the public Orator, Cambridge), Dr. Major, Donne, etc., etc., and there was not one person who did not feel a void in his life. Froude becomes the Editor of "Fraser," and I do not know that a better man could have been found for the office.

If I have lost a friend I seem to have gained a correspondent. There is a lady at Windsor Castle who, though she is never gazetted as dining with the Queen, has H.M.'s right ear "à ce qu'on m'a dit". She showed me some civility which I acknowledged by sending her a copy of my "Essays on the Drama". This produced a long letter on the Stage and literature, which I answered: and now has come a longer, which I have not. The worst on't is that she writes the most illegible of hands. In her first letter she expatiated on the merits of a certain Miss Heath (as I thought) through a page and half of note-paper—large size. But behold in a day or two I discovered that Miss Heath occupied only two or three lines, and that the others belonged to Mr. Macready whose name she writes thus . My eyes were opened by reading the comparatively legible (Lear), which I knew Miss H. does not play. This illegible female's name is Skirrett. Most probably you know all about her, for she seems to know everybody of any mark, and really if addiction to the Drama be in me (as you sometimes intimate) a folly, this ancient virgin is more foolish than I am, since she far outstrips me in the *penchant*. She is indeed equally zealous about Buckle on Civilisation, and as she has invited herself to my room at Windsor Castle next time I go thither, I expect a strict examination on many subjects. I think I shall give her a few lessons, if our acquaintance continue, in round hand. As it is, I may be a loser of wit and wisdom, as I certainly am of patience.

. . . By the way, Westminster's Dean gave Charles[1] and Mildred a massive silver tea-pot. Fashions change. I asked your sister what gifts she had at *her* wedding. "None," and that was precisely the amount of mine. I fancy indeed she rejected some diamonds; whereas no one offered me either bread or a stone. Perhaps if I were to spread a report that I was to be married, I might now redeem the time. What do you advise? (Merivale said one day that having a multitude of cousins likely to marry and looking to him for presents, he had bought, at a

[1] Charles Edward Donne married Mildred, youngest daughter of John Mitchell Kemble, in May, 1861. She died 15th April, 1876.

sale, a gross of fish slices (nickel), and was accordingly prepared to be liberal.) Know you that Brookfield has a country living, and that her pretty face and his pen are now benefiting rustics? I have long known that on either hand of Jupiter stands two urns, from one of which he distributes good and from the other evil to the sons of men. Sometimes, however, Jupiter takes more nectar than he can carry and makes mistakes. I think his godship must have been in this nectarine condition when he gave Brookfield that billet. . . .

JUNE 10, 1861
40 WEYMOUTH STREET, PORTLAND PLACE, W.

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

SEPT. 12, 1861

. . . We parted company, they returning to their hostesses, and I proceeding with bag on back and staff in hand to the Cheddar country. How I do love a vagabond's life! I walked among the plains and hills far away from the high-roads and abodes of men, by rills and rivulets, up downs and over meadows, not forgetting to call occasionally at stray ale-houses (the beer is good, cider-land though it be), and was quite happy, and not the less at finding that London had by no means damaged my pedestrian forces—twenty miles a day not bad for a Cockney 54 years old last July! . . .

I hope to take a run in the Eastern Counties for a few days, principally that I may see again in the flesh that hermit Ed. FitzGerald, who will not come to Town—and then I must shut up for the winter. I heard from Malkin a few days ago. He gave a very good account of his wife, and was greatly pleased because his hay was well in, while that of his neighbours was ill-out, rain having come in no scanty measure upon Inverness-shire. He was exercising his wonted hospitality to South Britons. . . .

I am embarking in another biographising scheme—the 5th in my few and evil years; and which from its extent, and since it will not commence before January, 1862, will probably be the last. Murray is going to publish a new Biographia Britannica, and has invited me to write for him the lives of all the Actors

and Actresses since such folks existed in Britain! Perhaps before the work gets to X or Y, some one may have to write the life of that eminent theatrical character W. B. D. I have, however, stipulated for a larger share in this business—namely, the Lives of Dramatic authors generally, and on such terms it will be worth my while. So I shall be your family chronicler.

There is in hand a project for erecting a memorial to your late brother John. If we can raise £250 it is proposed to have a bust[1] by Woolner, which will be presented to Trinity College, Cambridge, and put up in the Library. The names already on the Committee are numerous and good, and I hope the issue will be prosperous, for it were great pity that such a scholar as he was should be uncommemorated. . . .

Going out late suits me ill, both as regards work and health. I know not whether London empty is not as agreeable to me as London full. I feel sure now that no one will ask me to put on my best clothes when I am in my study robes, or that more than one will ask me to dinner. Fechter is to make the experiment of Othello next month. He so far surpassed my expectations in Hamlet, that I forbear predicting. You are sending us untried prodigies from America: and we keep our own at home, since the war has demolished the Kean's scheme of realising £10,000 by his trip.

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

GELDESTONE HALL, BECCLES
SEPT. 15, [1861]

MY DEAR DONNE,

I have no doubt that October 5 will find me fast at Woodbridge; and very glad to see you there, if you will take the trouble to take me in your way. Unless I am called on to go on my Ship-voyage to *Holland*, which is now very unlikely, there is no likelihood of my being called elsewhere.

W. Airy came over some ten days ago, and I afterwards went with him to have a long day's ramble over our old Haunts *at Bury*, the school, the church, etc. I looked at your old house

[1] This was accomplished, and the bust of John Mitchell Kemble is in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge.

by the Theatre with some sadness; and did not forget poor Donaldson in looking at the school. I don't know how it thrives now.

You see where I date from now: Kerrich and my sister desire me to send you their kind Remembrances. I return to my old Woodbridge quarters in a very few days, and *believe* that I shall winter there, as last year.

Here is autumn come at last after so delightful a summer as I scarce remember.

. . . . . .

Believe me now and ever
Yrs. affect.
E. FG.

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

40 Weymouth Street
April 4, 1862

By assuming that I am guided in my opinions about the American question by the "Times," you do me, my dear friend, and many others on this side of the Atlantic, scant justice. I have found in these others, *e.g.*, such as the Romillies, Froude, Spedding, etc., a disposition to make every allowance for the Northerners, and to assent to their right in the controversy. And for myself I cannot well be influenced by the "Times," inasmuch as I don't look into it once in a month.

If you have seen John Mill's article in "Fraser" you will have seen very nearly what I think of the business. And before I read it, I had used nearly the same line of argument. Repeatedly I have urged the unfairness of comparing U.S. in 1862 with England in 1862. We have had our lesson and paid for it. U.S. is now taking hers. In 1762, for that is the century with which the moral; though not the material, comparison should be respectively made, England had in Ireland her secessionists. In 1762 England bragged against foreign nations loudly as ever New York now brags against New Orleans. Our grandfathers firmly believed that one Englishman could beat three Frenchmen: that every Frenchman was a frog-eater, a

dancing-master or a hair-dresser: and that a British sailor was almost the noblest work of God. 'Tis the old story, the fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge. The Americans are the lineal descendants of Britain, a younger generation of bold, brave but somewhat braggart fellows. Next, I am accustomed to say, between America and Britain the comparison is on another score unequal. We do not compare England with all Europe, and its different races. But U.S. are in fact a Europe in size, and made of nearly as many several families of mankind. There are Germans, Hungarians, Scots, English, *i.e.*, Anglo-men, Welsh, and what is worse, Irish.[1] 'Twas an evil day for the North when Ireland became too poor to sustain even its own potato-eating beggars. The Erin Emigrants have debased the original element of the U.S. population, even though England did formerly use their soil for *plantation*, *i.e.*, penal colonies. Nobler is the transplanted thief than the ragged Celt, *i.e.*, nobler as the element of a young nation. Pat individually, is often a good fellow, he'll murder, but he won't rob you; he'll lie, but he will share his last horn of poteen with you. But Pat can neither make nor obey a law. In the sixth century of the Christian Era, Ireland was the most learned country in the West. Her priests and doctors were in intimate correspondence with the Brahmins of Benares; the *Vedas* mention the sages of the Western Isle. What came of this precocity? Connemara and Tipperary. And of these sinking Celts a third of the U.S. population is made up now. Batuscka! I should say, from such internal evidence as I have met with, that most of the U.S. Newspapers were written by Irishmen! Is it so, or do the worst only come to England?

Again, I have attempted to convince the maligners of the North that most of the blackguardism and Anti-English feeling has heretofore come from the South—and that in fact it is the

[1] I am afraid Mr. Donne had a very poor opinion of the Irish people. Mrs. Fanny Kemble's grandson, Mr. Wister, remembers him telling a story about an old gentleman who regretted that the Dutch could not change countries with the Irish, "For the Dutch," he said, "would make of Ireland the rich and thrifty place it should be, while in Holland the Irish . . . would neglect the dykes".

Southern and not the Northern ingredient that has been so distasteful to England generally.

Could Washington write a letter from Elysium, would he not begin it with the words in which Dante addressed his countrymen in that most pathetic of protests which opens with —"'Popule me quid feci tibi!' What have I done to you—I who left a noble race of God-fearing and law-obeying men, and entrusted to them the loftiest of all political problems—a commonwealth not founded on the ruins of a monarchy and a priesthood—ruined by their own vices—but starting at once into life, as Pallas started from the brain of Jove. What have I done that you should let the rabble seize the springs of knowledge and the chief seats in the synagogue, that you covet the applause of other nations, instead of, as I did, doing your duty, and letting praise or blame come as it listed. I left you a Commonwealth such as Milton would have approved, and you have made it a cage of unclean things—'Popule me quid feci tibi!'"

There—such are some of my sentiments, are they at all like what you have read in the "Times"? I could give you more, but I think you have more than enough—and moreover I have not broken my fast.

. . . . . .

40 WEYMOUTH ST., PORTLAND PLACE
APRIL 4, '62

W. B. Donne to his daughter Valentia

40 WEYMOUTH ST.
[1862]

MY DEAREST VAL.,

All goes on smoothly here, except the kitchen-chimney which occasionally smokes. An "examiner" of chimneys is coming to-day to report upon it.

I have a letter from Brooke this morning (Captain Brooke of Ufford). What a pertinacious little animal it is! Professor Thompson has done all he can in Trinity College to inquire about a Tutor for the Brooklets—without success—and he (Brooke) wants him to perambulate the University in further

search. I had written to the Professor to beg he would give himself no further trouble, and I certainly shall not slip the collar on him again.

Of the three Sheriffs for Suffolk to be nominated to the Queen, Brooke is one; if he be pricked won't he roar—the more so as he has just established himself in a new house in Brussels. I send you the following puff from an American newspaper:—

PLANTAGENET WATER

FOR REMOVING PIMPLES, FRECKLES, BLOTCHES, TETTERS, WARTS, ETC. FROM THE SKIN

The face of my daughter was covered with pimples,
With freckles her shoulders were all stigmatized;
In vain she'd recourse to the drugs and the simples
And nostrums by ignorant quacks—advertised.
I saw your advertisement, Sir, and I bought her
A flask of Plantagenet's bloom-giving dew;
The pimples have fled from the face of my daughter,
The freckles have vanished and Bulley[1] for you.

—PATERFAMILIAS

Best love to Blanche and all around you
From affect. father
W. B. DONNE

Mrs. Fanny Kemble to W. B. Donne

LENOX
MAY 18TH, 1862

MY DEAR MR. DONNE,

If your *grand Daughter*[2] and my grand niece is worth her salt, my dear friend, she will be a charming baby by the time I come to London, and as I have a real old woman's enthusiasm for that kind of "creation," I look to finding great satisfaction from her.

The days are flying along, and I am just about to secure my berth in the steamer that is to take me *home*—all your excitement about the exhibition and all your foolish frivolity and vanity of a London season will be over, and you will be all blazed

[1] Bulley, I understand, sells a famous cosmetic in London.
[2] Catharine Bodham, eldest daughter of Charles E. Donne, and W. B. Donne's first grandchild.

out (the proper translation I take it for blasé) about everything new and quite glad to see something as old as I am, and that you have known as long, with the additional *enhancement* of constant distance and absence to increase my temporary value on my return. I have nothing to tell you—as for the war and so forth we will discuss those matters when we meet and begin to feel like leisurely talk on lengthy subjects. As I sit here at my window—looking out upon the very charming hill country—the farmer folk go driving in their smart gigs or comfortable char-a-bancs with wives and children to and from Church. Certainly hitherto there seems no abatement of prosperity in this rural district—at any rate wages and the rate of labour have not fallen a groat; and though tea and coffee and sugar are higher than for some years past, I have no idea that any of those luxuries are foregone by any of these Yankee farmers, who I think will pay their taxes quite as philosophically as they have given their lives for this struggle, about which they have at last become, after their own imperturbable fashion, terribly in earnest.

The distress among *our* poor cotton spinners breaks one's heart. I do trust the opening of the Port of New Orleans, now the Federal Government have it, will provide some alleviation to their pitiful case. How wonderfully the whole world is becoming involved in the whole world's conduct, and how curiously all the nations of the earth are becoming portions of each other, through their commercial interests.

My estate, the island of St. Simon's, one of the most famous seats of the long staple cotton culture, is, I am happy to say, just now planted with potatoes by and for the Yankees. The Negroes have been marched into the interior by their overseer, but whither they remain *internal* or not, I take it it will be a year or two before they return either bond or free to raise the famous long staple cotton on St. Simon's Island—the case is of course one of many.

Good bye and God bless you. I shall rejoice to see you again and am always

Yrs. very affectionally
FANNY KEMBLE

My love to the children and the grandchild.

On 14th December, 1861, Prince Albert died, and in a letter to Miss Skirrett, written on Christmas Day following, Mr. Donne says:—

"I am very glad to hear from you such good accounts of the Queen—poor lady, hers is a sore trial, and one that time, as it so often does, will not alleviate, since her main prop is knocked away:—

> A nation slowly wise, and meanly just,
> To buried merit rears the tardy bust!

Perhaps there is not a more signal instance of manly perseverance in the teeth of discouragement than was that of the late Prince Albert."

On more than one occasion His Royal Highness had consulted Mr. Donne about the translation of plays suitable for the stage (the death of Wallenstein among others), and like all those who ever came in contact with the Prince, Mr. Donne recognised what the country lost by his death.

It was a melancholy pleasure to W. B. Donne to compile at the command of the Queen a "Register of the burials of the Prince Consorts". In acknowledgment of his trouble Her Majesty presented him with handsome prints of Herself and Prince Albert signed with Her Autograph.

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
MAY 22, [1863]

MY DEAR DONNE,

My "Gentleman" came safe to me yesterday—well breeched in Lincoln Green. I am obliged to trouble you to let me know what the cost is, which I will send you, together with 5/- for the former vol., which you probably have forgotten and wished me to forget.

I write with a very bad middle finger, which I have suffered to grow bad so long that now it takes much Time and Poultice to get right again. But for this, I should have been off to meet Miss Crabbe at her Brother's in Norfolk: and even now, *hope* to be handy and decent enough to get off To-morrow. But Mrs. Berry does not guarantee that.

I had a very kind letter from old Spedding the other day.

How rejoiced I was to see his hand in the New Edition of Shakespeare, only much too little of it. For as I told him 20 years ago *he* should have done the whole work: and then the same Portrait at the Beginning would have almost done for Author and Editor too. But the New Edition as it is, is the best, I have no doubt, we have got yet. I think I see that the Editors' themselves would not like to be trusted with *their own* conjectural Readings: which they don't give many of.

. . . . . .

I see Mr. Woodward's Magazine advertised. Look over Piotrowski's "Escape from Siberia" which seems to me a truthful and interesting Book.

My new Boat is to be ready about the middle of June, I suppose, but I don't much care about it, since one of its uses (to be at Lowestoft with my sister) is gone; and all the Fuss about it has wearied one. I am obliged also to hire a new Captain: my one-legged Man having forfeited my confidence; but where shall I find such *English!*

You needn't write so long a letter as this in return: but you must tell me what I owe you.

And believe me yours ever

E. FG.

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

[1863]

[A FRAGMENT]

My three Books aboard have been these, Greeks, Montaigne, and "David Copperfield". What a pity that a few Pages of vulgar Taste, and Minor Theatre Effect, should mar the last: which might *almost* be made perfect by—a Pair of Scissors—my great Remedy, you know! I only came home here yesterday, having been living aboard my Boat these six weeks and more; in spite of a Cabin I can't stand upright in, and only ten feet deck to walk along up and down. And I am now back because *Frederick* Tennyson is to be with me any day. He wrote from his Mother's at Hampstead, and I suppose will be here early this week. I shall of course try and make him

stop as long as I can; I have not seen him these ten years, I think. After he goes I shall probably run to Gelson for a while, as they say they wish to see me there.

Let me hear about Mowbray's Marriage.[1] He said it was to be sometime this month, I think: I enclose a cheque with which you are to buy him what you think he will best like; no one can possibly be more welcome to such a little Token than he, or any one of your sons; who, besides being *your* sons, have always been so kind and thoughtful of me. By-the-bye, I ought to have thanked Charles too for the three Plays he sent me. They are not Æschylus or Sophocles to be sure: yet they interest me as showing the strange bare skeleton of what plumps out into effective acting Drama. I wish you could send me Lover's[2] "White Horse of the Peppards" and "Rory o' More" which I remember as very effective too, with some clever Songs.

Here is an "effective" Farrago!

Ever yours
E. FG.

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
AUG. 25, [1863?]

MY DEAR DONNE,

I only had your Note and its Enclosure after returning from Bawdsey Ferry (the Mouth of our Harbour) after a stay there of ten days. Thither I went because my Hostess was unwell: the Maid sent home; and I had lent my Ship (like a Fool) to the as great Fool who borrowed her for 5 days to go to Holland and return in; which, 5 days spread into a fortnight, from a fierce West wind that blocked them up in the Meuse as fast as Agamemnon was at Aulis.

. . . . . .

I think you would like this Bawdsey (though the Name should hardly be mentioned to Ears polite): only about a dozen Fishermen's Houses, built where our River runs into the Sea over a foaming Bar: on one side of which is a good sand to

[1] William Mowbray Donne was married December, 1863, to Edith Salmon.
[2] Samuel Lover, 1797-1868, song-writer, novelist and painter. Published romance of *Rory O'More* in 1837.

Felixstowe and on the other an orange-coloured Crag Cliff towards Orford Haven: not a single respectable House, or Inhabitant, or Lodger: no white Cravats; an Inn with scarce Table or Chair: and only Bread and Cheese to eat. I often lie there in my Boat: I wish you could come and do so.

But now I have got my Boat back, I think we are in for wet weather: which we shall all be glad of. Capital harvests everywhere: and even the Green Crops much better off than I have seen them in much less dry Seasons. There have been great dews that have kept their Tails up. One night when I was becalmed going to Holland the sails reeked as after a 3 hours' Rain; and strange Fish with blue Fins came up and followed in such wake as the Boat made. They looked ghastly and haunted me in a Dream!

What is all this about! Don't write any answer. As to the Portrait[1] [David Fisher the Actor] I think I see it must be like: and a man I showed it to (Manby the gross Churchwarden) said, "That's a Fisher face sure enough"—though he only just remembered David in "Paul and Virginia"! I have enclosed and sent the Portrait to David's surviving Turtle (?) —poor dear old Mary Wilson—who has long ago designated her future Grave so close to *his* as to be contrary to the laws of the Cemetery. But her little Treason has been suffered to pass. I believe she is not at home just now, so I do not know what she will think of the photograph. But I suppose it won't be half handsome enough for her.

Ever yrs. E. FG.

Mrs. Fanny Kemble to W. B. Donne

LYNDHURST
WED. 13TH, 1862 (?)

Thank you for the Bible and Prayer Book, dear Mr. Donne—it has just occurred to me to wonder if you keep my letters, for if you do I think it must be quite curious to see how many of them begin with "Thank you" for something or other. The books are welcome in their new clothes.

[1] David Fisher the Elder, 1788-1858, one of the Managers of Fisher's Company which had the monopoly of the Suffolk Theatres. About 1838 he retired to Woodbridge, and died there 20th August, 1858.

I am glad to think that after all the unpleasant censorial duties you have in prospect, you are likely to make an escape to the Isle of Wight, and to come while we are there. I never have visited it before, and am therefore ignorant of our possible routes and places of sojourn. I am absolutely and helplessly under Adelaide's guidance and she has some purpose I believe of going from Bournemouth to the Island, or perhaps from Weymouth, and I think Ventnor will be our head quarters.

. . . . . .

This place is lovely, but does not agree with me. The air is too mild and the atmosphere too heavy. I was not intended to thrive where myrtles and fuschias grow as high as the house, and I have frequent headaches, which are almost a new experience to me, and not a pleasant one.

. . . . . .

Believe me
Yrs. affectionately
FANNY KEMBLE

The Dean of Westminster (Trench) was consecrated Archbishop of Dublin on New Year's Day, 1864. Mr. Donne wrote him the following letter on the occasion :—

W. B. Donne to R. C. Trench

SUNDAY EVENING
JAN. 24, '64
40 WEYMOUTH ST., PORTLAND PLACE

MY DEAR ARCHBISHOP,

You leave London, I believe, to-morrow. I cannot allow you to depart without offering you my most hearty thanks for all the kindness you have exercised to me and mine through so many years.

To have ranked among your friends was from the very first accounted by me a high privilege, and will always be reckoned and reverted to as one of the happier incidents of my life. The currents of our lives have parted widely, you, as you so well deserve, have risen to high honours. I have remained pretty near the point whence I started, and nearly if not quite as deservedly. I have no cause for murmuring at my lot. I have

truly rejoiced at every step of your elevation. May you long, very long enjoy your new position.

You will be sorely missed by many, by no one more than myself.

Believe me to be
With the greatest respect and affection
Yrs. ever
W. B. DONNE

Mrs. Fanny Kemble to W. B. Donne

INTERLAKEN
AUG. 10, 1865

MY DEAR MR. DONNE,

I have no doubt at all, my dear friend, that those whose lives have been best spent are always least satisfied of that fact, and that you should cavil at yourself in reviewing your career does not surprise me. No one assuredly who knows you will endorse your verdict, least of all myself, who among the many excellent people I have known have honoured and esteemed few more than yourself. To the wish that I may see many happy returns of your birthday I say Amen. We have been friends a great many years, and through them all you have been a most helpful friend to me. I wish—but indeed "if wishing well" had had "a body in it," I should have been the like to you.

I hope Milly is very happy in the anticipation of her new home.[1] I envy her the pleasure of "arranging" herself in it.

W. B. Donne to his daughter Blanche

SEPT. 19, 1865

All last week visiting Theatres. The heat, dirt, dust, smells, horrible. I never had such a job. We took in the dressing-rooms this year. Talk of Ireland and pigsties—they are Dutch cleanliness compared to some of these rooms. I have been sick and dizzy half-a-dozen times a day. I have imported into our own house several varieties of biting and stinging insects.

[1] The important living of Faversham, Kent, was offered to, and accepted by, Mr. Donne's eldest son Charles at this time. He resigned it in 1901.

W. B. Donne to J. W. Blakesley

JAN. 18, 1866
40 WEYMOUTH ST.
PORTLAND PLACE

MY DEAR BLAKESLEY,

Many happy New Years to you and all of yours.

. . . . . .

I took two ladies to the Covent Garden Pantomime. Their *united* ages passed 90, and neither of them had ever seen either a Ballet or a Pantomime before, though they had not quite shunned in their past walk in life the synagogues of Satan. They were as good as children for delight, and I verily think imagined the Transformation Scene (among the most beautiful of Grieve's works in that line) to be a glimpse of the New Jerusalem. They were indeed rather amazed at some feats of the ballet-dancers, and looked, or affected to look, at their books —however I elbowed them well, and bade them improve the *shining* hour.

. . . . . .

Yrs. ever truly
W. B. DONNE

In 1866 Queen Victoria gave her permission for Mr. Donne to edit the "Correspondence of George III. with Lord North from 1768 to 1783" from originals at Windsor, which was published by Mr. Murray the following year.

It revealed the causes which led to the American War of Independence, and Mr. Donne, not being a party man, was eminently fitted for the task of editor.

W. B. Donne to J. W. Blakesley

(1866)

MY DEAR BLAKESLEY,

I should like to have vouchers of the general well-being at Ware, as I have been for many weeks as ignorant of your Ware about as if you were Bishop of Honolulu. And in order to earn the same, I transcribe from a letter of Ed. Fitz-Gerald's just received the following passage: "Now my Greek Plays are done, I have got hold of Blakesley's "Herodotus"

which seems to me *capital:* perhaps because it helps meaning by its clear, concise vernacular notes. But then, is not that its virtue for all readers? Oh! the comfort of an able, practical English scholar for Editor, as compared to an owl-eyed German! Blakesley is so capital in his language, whether for land or sea, military, commercial or politic; so unaffected, so without a style, thank GOD. His introduction and excursuses appear to me excellent too: but I may not be so good a judge of them, though of their *manner* of writing I may be a sufficient judge. If Blakesley had time, one would wish for a translation of some of these books." Them's my sentiments also exactly.

I spent a very pleasant month with my girls at Cromer, August 6—Sept. 3, and left them three weeks longer there by themselves to their own devices. They had some kinsfolk there who were supposed to chaperon them, but I made no inquiries as I am always content to suppose things done "decently and in order". To be satisfied with the surface of things, whatever Carlyle may say to the contrary, is, O Canon Numicius, "prope res una sola que quæ possit facere et servare beatum"—in this world.

Fred[1] has a son, to replace the little girl he lost in Ireland last year. Born at Aden, I imagine it is black; had it been a girl it would have been—a toast. I am putting the last strokes to Geo. III. and am right glad to see land, for it has been dreary and tedious work. Had the printers kept pace with copy, I should have been a free man some weeks ago. You of course will have a copy, so don't steal one—to suppose you would *buy* one would be an affront to *me*. "Hoc munere Saltem"—for your many good deeds to me.

Yours with best regards
Most truly
W. B. DONNE

OCTOBER 11, 1866
40 WEYMOUTH ST.
REV. CANON BLAKESLEY

[1] Frederick E. Mowbray Donne.

Mrs. Fanny Kemble to W. B. Donne

WIDMORE, BROMLEY
THURS. 28TH, '66

MY DEAR MR. DONNE,

What has become of you, my dear friend—or perhaps, what has become of the note I wrote to you immediately on the receipt of the two scarlet and gold volumes—even before I got the few lines which followed them on the heels. You told me so long ago that you may have forgotten it, though I have not, that when you had washed your hands of King George you would give yourself a holiday—and so when the scarlet and gold books arrived, I wrote to thank you for them and to remind you of this saying of yours, asking you to come down to St. Leonards and see me, since which I have heard nothing from you but a "terrible silence," leaving me to ponder whether you are not what the Yankees call "to hum," *i.e.*, at home, or whether the idea of coming to see me by way of a holiday may not have struck you pen and ink speechless with its absurdity—in spite of which I should like to know if my note never reached you, or what cause there may be for "this thus-ness".

Yr. affectionate friend
FANNY KEMBLE

W. B. Donne to R. C. Trench

40 WEYMOUTH ST.
MARCH 30, 1867

MY DEAR ARCHBISHOP,

I received from Macmillan, a few days since, the latest of your many kind gifts to me. As yet I have not had time to read much of the "Studies," but I do not like to leave your present longer unacknowledged.

The little I have read shows me how much I have to thank you for.

I was inexpressibly gratified by your opinion of my labours on George the Third's letters. So far as the newspapers are concerned I have run a mild gauntlet. What the Monthlies and Quarterlies have to say remains to be seen.

But what I value infinitely beyond what has come forth, or may come forth in print, is the number of letters I have received from friends like yourself in favour of my comment. To say truth I expected a very opposite verdict, for having during the Wilkes and the American business abused the Tories, I turn sharp round "ad finem" on the Whigs and therefore looked for the bat's fate in the fable. Yet I still go abroad by daylight, neither birds nor beasts displaying any animosity.

Present our best regards to Mrs. Trench and all around you. Your handsome Charles called on us lately.

Believe me

Respectfully and affectionately yrs.

W. B. DONNE

W. B. Donne to J. W. Blakesley

APRIL 18, 1867
40 WEYMOUTH STREET

MY DEAR BLAKESLEY,

Is it to you I am indebted for a very gratifying and very good article on the correspondence of Geo. III. with Ld. North in the "Times" of last Tuesday? I know you never miss a chance of helping and commending friends, of doing kind acts by stealth; also that you are among the bolts in the Thunderer's quiver—a bolt indeed which he takes out only when he is disposed to be gracious, and lastly, if *you* it be not, I am bothered entirely, for I am not aware of having another friend who would think it worth his while, being on the staff, to praise me by "Times" in the morning.

So if the article be from your hand I am again deeply in your debt for good service—if not, I am much obliged to our (unknown) correspondent. The notice will do me and "my Murray" much good. My Murray expresses himself quite content with the goods and the sale of them, and altogether the press has handled me very tenderly. I looked for hailstones, and I am pelted, when so, by sugar plums, as if it were a carnival. The "Guardian" taxed me with "frisking about in search of fine writing," but *that* I took in change for my occasional skits at Bishops.

The book is by this time pretty nearly shelved, but I have to congratulate myself on "safe delivery"—ought I to be Churched?

Charles, who has recently gone through his first confirmation, has received a very commendatory letter upon his work generally at Faversham from the Archbishop, so I hope the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury will have no reason for repenting of their choice.

I have been "hearing, consulting and advising with" the chief of the Lord Chamberlain Department on the new Theatrical License Bill shortly to be laid before the Houses. If it pass, I shall have a good deal more work, and perhaps a little more pay. One good thing will be that the Inspectorship of the buildings will be taken off my shoulders, and as it gave me a great deal of trouble, was yearly increasing in amount, and brought me in 0, I am well pleased to be rid of it. I am not sure that the change which has been forced upon us will be an improvement—there are certain ancient matters which it were best to handle very gently or not at all. Among them, the functions of the Lord Chamberlain and the XXXIX Articles, etc.

With best regards from all
Yours very truly
W. B. DONNE

REV. CANON BLAKESLEY

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
OCT. 5, [1867]

MY DEAR DONNE,

I duly received your kind letter from Switzerland: but as you said you were daily expecting to leave the place where you wrote from, I did not pretend to answer. I suppose you are back—or almost back—by this time: and I hope all the better for your Journey. I have even less than usual to tell of my own Travels; less Travel to tell of, I mean: not even so far as Dover on one side, and no further than Yarmouth on the other.

And now here is October like Winter: so much so that I have been shut up in my kennel here for three or four days, during which W. Airy has been to see me.

My ship is still afloat, however: and her Crew still complete: gone down To-day for their Sunday Dinner at home To-morrow. If this North wind relaxes, I may yet cruise about a very little more, before being consigned to my Winter Tomb.

I daresay you heard from Mowbray about our doings at Lowestoft in August. I don't know when I have had to do with so pleasant a couple as he and his wife. And about 3 weeks ago I found the Cowells staying close by our "Harbour" mouth: and Cowell and I had some Sophocles together.

. . . . . .

Yrs. affect. my dear Donne
E. FG.

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
VALENTINA!
[1868]

MY DEAR DONNE,

The enclosed explains that a new Edition of my old *Omar* is about to come forth—with a good deal added in verse and prose. The former Edition was as much *lost* as sold, when B. Quarritch changed houses; he has told Cowell these 2 years that a few more would sell: a French version has revived my old flame: and now Mr. Childs will soon send some 200 copies to B. Quarritch.

It seems absurd to make terms about such a pamphlet, likely to be so slow of sale, so I have written to Q. in answer; that he must fix the most *saleable* price he can; take his own proper profit out of it; and when 50 copies are sold give me mine. If this won't do, I have bid him ask you. The whole thing is not worth two letters or two conversations about; I should be inclined to make the whole Edition over to him except such copies as I want to give away (to W. B. D. and Cowell, etc., and a few more), but one only looks more of a Fool by doing so—so I say after 50 copies, etc., when I believe my Ghost will have to call upon B. Q. for a reckoning.

The great thing (I tell him) is, only to put a moderate price, such as most likely to be given, not stick on what won't be given

at all. Don't you go to B. Q. about this: only, if he sends to ask you, you are apprized. I do not think I should ask you such a thing if it lay much out of your way. Only don't *you* try to make a Bargain for me; I can't tell you how absurd even this much Palaver about it is.

Ever yours
E. FG.

W. B. Donne to J. W. Blakesley

1868

MY DEAR BLAKESLEY,

You are not far wrong in your imaginary picture of a Governor of Greenwich Hospital. The last I saw, while dwelling at Blackheath, was in a Bath chair, and had a "pig-tail," but your sketch is not quite complete—you should have added "and a great blasphemer," at least if I may judge by certain phrases applied by him to my "limbs and eyes" for unwittingly crossing a grass-plot in front of his Lodge. Of the blasphemy and Bath chairs of the *Reds* of Chelsea, I cannot speak, never having trespassed on their *greens*, but doubtless they do not come behind the *blues* of Greenwich in d—— eloquence.

Excuse brevity. I am head over ears in business—French Plays—a revise for "Fraser"—and a launch for the July "Edinburgh" and Slanders for the "Saturday".

. . . . . .

Yrs. sincerely
W. B. DONNE

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
JAN. 2, [1870]

MY DEAR DONNE,

I sent off three Vols. of "Edinburgh" by Rice 3 days ago: and ought to have written to you before to say so. But there is no occasion for you to write if they have reached you: only let me know directly if they have *not*. I wrote to Mowbray to tell him I had spent but a dreary Christmas here, and am very glad it is gone.

I hear you have reviewed the Westminster Play; Mowbray says it went off capitally.

. . . . . .

I really think Cowell has *dropt* me. Why I cannot tell. In a few days, I daresay, I shall send you one of my valuable Philological Papers in the *Tymms* Repository; but remember I don't want an acknowledgment of it. It is only a little mild provincial fun for Christmas. I want to see Miss Mitford's Memoirs, which I hope will one day be advertised cheap in Mudie's surplus list. I thought what I saw of the book in the "Athenæum" very good.

Did you ever see Kean in Brutus? I bought an old copy of the Play—poor enough, and yet with half-a-dozen good lines. What an opportunity for a writer of Genius is that last situation when Brutus pauses before giving the sign—made nothing of by Payne. I see David Fisher was the Titus in 1818.

Ever yrs.

E. FG.

W. B. Donne to J. W. Blakesley

40 Weymouth St., W.
Sept. 29, 1870

My dear Blakesley,

. . . . . .

I have just completed the annual survey of 35 Theatres—very satisfactorily, inasmuch as the Report is at least one half of it commendatory, and the other half very slight in the articles of neglect or omission.

When I began acting as the Devil's archdeacon—for are not Theatres *his* ideas of a Church?—in 1857, 20 Theatres then occupied me far more time, and required, besides curses, far more ink and paper than 35 do now.

There was indeed a sad finale. On the last day of examination a poor property-man overbalanced himself at the top of a stone stair-case, fell to the bottom and fractured his skull. It is a stair-case I had protested against for some years—the flights are too long, the breaks by landings too few: and the managers—now extinct—would not put up hand-rails, though indeed in this case they would not have availed, as he fell down

the middle, and too rapidly to have caught at even a straw. He was not killed on the spot, but survived four days.

The Radicals here and there are displaying such stupidity and meanness about the Princess Louise's Dowry that I am almost tempted, as Mrs. Jarley says of herself, "to turn Atheist"—perhaps to turn Conservative may do as well—at least for the present. I now call to mind that I once had to rebuke a knot of Tories who were complaining of the cost of the Queen. They thought that Her Majesty *did* pocket and *could* apply to her own use the entire Civil List, and were unaware that if the Crown had its own again—*i.e.*, its landed houses—very little of Lancashire, to say nothing of other Shires, would be left for its present owners or occupiers.

With best regards to all

Yrs. ever

W. B. Donne

Mrs. Fanny Kemble to W. B. Donne

Widmore
Friday 14, 1871

I cannot but confess that I was provoked as well as very sorry for poor Frederick's in some respects ill-timed indulgence in the small pox—not that you would have got *any* good out of me during that troubled and tormented and tossed-in-a-blanket feeling season which I passed in London previous to the wedding (Mrs. Leigh's),[1] but you might have had perhaps some rational intercourse with Sarah, who is your devoted, quite as much as you are hers. Do you know I think it is quite pretty and poetical, and a thing that I do not remember put anywhere into poetry as it ought to be, this reward that you and my constantly kind friend Arthur Malkin are reaping in the very affectionate regard of my two girls. I think having loved me as you both have till I am now an old woman—it is pleasant that these two rather nice young women should step forward to exhibit in their respect and esteem and affectionate regard to you both their Mother's gratitude for your life-long friendship.

[1] Mrs. Kemble's daughter, Frances Butler, was married on 29th June, 1871, to the Honble. and Rev. James Wentworth Leigh, the present Dean of Hereford.

Thank you very much for the photographs which seem to me both very good—I think—you are favoured by Heaven as few men are in the fact of your being so little disfigured by photography compared with other human mortals.

Yr. affectionate friend
FANNY KEMBLE

W. B. Donne to J. W. Blakesley

JAN. 18, 1872
40 WEYMOUTH STREET

MY DEAR BLAKESLEY,

Little did I think to live to be one of the most celebrated and unpopular men of the day. No doubt the tyranny of the Examiner will be brought before the Honble. House of Commons before many weeks are over. I need hardly tell you that I have not read my own praise in the newspapers. But "Bell's Weekly Messenger" for Sunday last was sent to me directly by post, and I had curiosity enough to glance over a column and a half of virtuous indignation. From thence I find that I am "a flunkey," "an unjust steward," so far as regards friendship with Mammon (Lowe and Gladstone), "a kill joy," "a fly in the pot of ointment," "an antidiluvian," "a cumberer of the ground," "a rag of popery," "an eyesore," "a thing not needful," "a spectre," "a thing to be swept away with other rubbish" (that I take to be a hit at the *cloth* as well as the censor), "an owl," "a pedant," and an "overpaid lackey". The fact is that the letter which I wrote and signed was no ordinary act or deed of mine. I dissuaded reply in any shape, but was officially required to write one. The shots were all meant originally for our most unpopular Government—and . . . for the Ld. Chamberlain. My letter however instantly converted me into a lightning conductor for these sparks of the Press. The Press on its part, could not have found in Gt. Britain or in the Colonies a more impregnable rhinoceros. Once I did get angry—and that was by a most snobbish and impertinent letter from L.'s Private Secretary addressed to Spencer Ponsonby. I could not answer it as I would, since one office never speaks truth to another; but let me ever come across T. W. and he

shall have a piece of my private opinion of himself. I am in the Press with "Euripides" for the next volume of Ancient Classics for English Readers—and on Saturday commence a course of six lectures at the Royal Institution, of which I enclose a Play Bill. Best love to all at Ware.

Yrs. affty.
W. B. DONNE

Mrs. Fanny Kemble to W. B. Donne

WIDMORE
SUNDAY 31ST, [1872]

Thank you heartily for the "Euripides," my dear Mr. Donne.[1] I cannot help being sorry that Schlegel's Essays on his Plays are among the discarded lumber that better knowledge casts aside, because I owe to him my first acquaintance with the great Grecian, and cannot leave off being grateful to him.

I have heard what I think you will be sorry for, that the Wisters[2] mean to return to America this Autumn. I suppose they are right, as they will have nearly a year's work to do before they can make the house they are going to, fit and ready for their reception, but it will seem dismal to me to have to think of Sarah on the other side of the Atlantic while I remain on this.

I hope you have good accounts of Charles' eye.

Believe me always yrs. affectionately
FANNY KEMBLE

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
APRIL 4, 1872

MY DEAR DONNE,

The lad who comes to read to me of a night now, is one of a Class of two, who read a Greek Play—and the Play they are now reading is the Medea. So your little Book came apropos to him as well as to myself, you see; and he has read out to me the greater part of it already: his own Play, of course.

[1] In 1872 W. B. Donne edited *Euripides* for the "Ancient Classics for English Readers," published by Messrs. Blackwood.
[2] Mrs. Kemble's daughter Sarah married Dr. Owen Wister.

I was glad to get a hint about the Orestean Pylades: I only know him in Æschylus: but henceforward I shall recognise something of a *Dæmon* under his mask. I daresay you give a very just Estimate of Euripides' character: but I cannot rank him anywhere near his two Predecessors. Nor, I think, did I much admire Mr. Webster's "versions".

. . . . . .

Now *I hope you use my Snuffbox.* I felt humiliated when you took my other out of your Pocket in Bond St. That day I went up to see a poor man who is really slowly dying in a Garret with scarce a friend to go and see him. . . . Though he likes me he expressed no wish at all to see me again. He seemed to like Laurence, who very kindly went to see how it was with him at my request, some two months ago. He scarce ever cares to write and tell me about himself; but his Landlord will do so.

I have been reading old Sergeant Prime's[1] "Recollections," pleasant enough to me: also Aldolphus' Do.[2] I wish the Boy could read me some Sophocles decently; and I understand as he reads.

Don't answer this letter, pray, it is an answer to your Book: for which I thank you as for others before, and remain always yours.

E. FG.

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
APRIL 22, [1872 ?]

MY DEAR DONNE,

I have not written to you a long while, quite dry of anything worth writing, and my eyes in indifferent trim. And now I can't tell you anything worth drawing a Reply from you, busy as you are in many ways. If you and yours are well, however, I want but little information except Mrs. Kemble's Address. Laurence who has been down with me here, said that

[1] George Pryme, 1781-1868, political economist. His *Recollections* published 1870.

[2] John Adolphus, 1768-1845. *Recollections of the Public Career and Private Life*, with extracts from his Diaries. Published by his daughter, Emily Henderson, 1871.

he saw her in London, where she was making a flying visit, on her way, I understand him, to Ireland. Perhaps you know as little of her present Address as I do who ask it.

You will very likely see Laurence, and he will tell you all about our doings together. I found him much as I left him some 15 years ago: a little gray-haired; as pleasant Company; and just as far from making his Fortune by Painting. The weather was stingy and disagreeable all the time he was here, and turned warm and pleasant the Day after he left. So much so that I have got out every Day since in my *little* Boat on the River, and purpose going down to-morrow to the River's mouth, where my great Ship lies.

When May comes she also will be dressing herself for the Summer; which I suppose will pass over much in the same way as the last two Summers have passed. And then—another dull Winter—if one lives it through.

Have you read Morton's Letters? Yes: and admired them —I think. They ought to be printed in some Magazine, for others to read also. But the best part of them was lost upon Blackwood—for whom I copied them, and who only mislaid the MS.

. . . . . .

Mind you take care of the Book, perhaps Spedding would like to see it. But who can calculate on him?

Love to all your Folks, and believe me

Yours and theirs always

E. FG.

W. B. Donne to J. W. Blakesley

40 WEYMOUTH ST., W.
JUNE 29, 1872

MY DEAR BLAKESLEY,

The "Daily News" of to-day says it is *rumoured* that you are to be Dean of Lincoln. Now the very instant I saw Dr. Jeremie's decease announced, I put up my vows to Heaven and St. Gladstone that you might be his successor, not merely because the prefix of Very Rev^{d}. would become your name well, neither because of your fitness in all respects for

decanical rank, but because I recollect your telling me that Lincoln was *the* Deanery which you would prefer to all others.

If you confirm the *rumour* I shall illuminate, and put up a vast transparency, with a canopy of the Prince of Wales' feathers and his motto (slightly altered), "I Dean".

I am plagued with sons who are lunatics: "sometimes they fall into the water and sometimes into the fire". Some time since Charles nearly knocked his eye out, as you know, now, this day week, Frederick smashes his right ankle, by slipping on a stone stair-case (luckily in some respects in this house) and so just as he was getting quite well, and with some paying work in prospect, he is laid on his back, and bandaged and *splint*-ed.

Charles just arrived, bringing the "Standard," which does not *rumour* but confirms. I will discard the "D. N." and take "Mrs. Harris" and turn Tory. So at least my visage and that of all here is illuminated, and we all tender our heartiest felicitations.

I noted your absence from a Revision meeting this week; and was afraid indisposition might be the cause: now I suppose it was merely because you were *in-Dean's-position*.

With very best regards and congratulations to Mrs. Blakesley,

Ever affectionately yours
W. B. DONNE

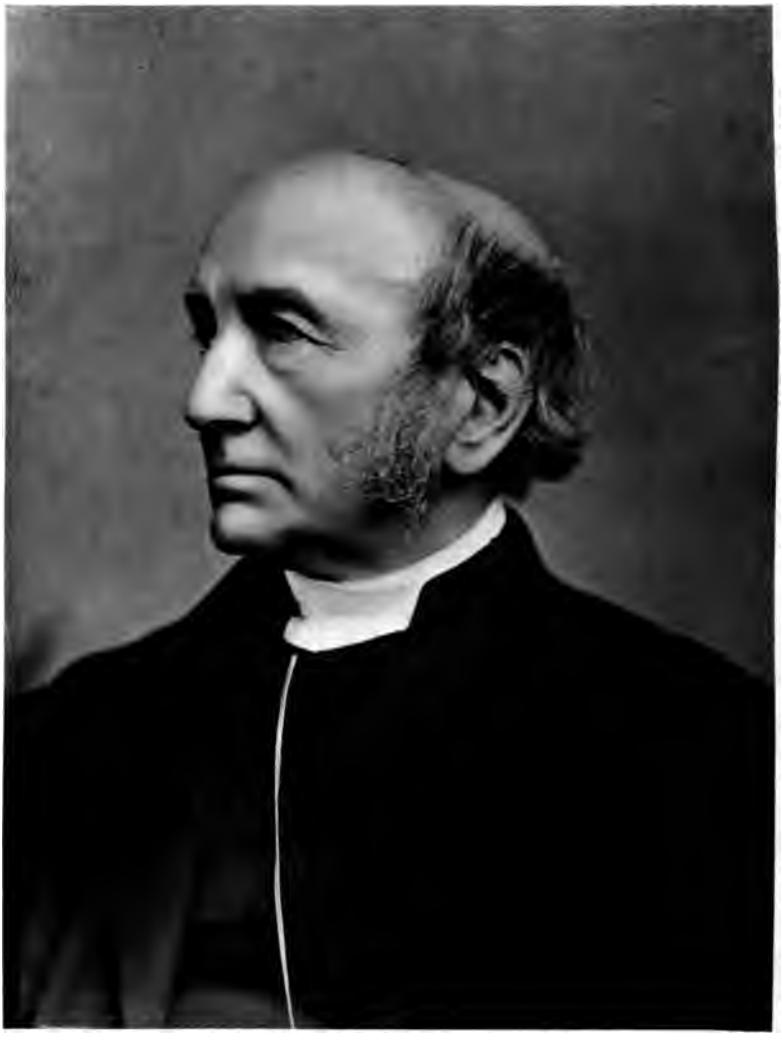
J. W. Blakesley to W. B. Donne

JUNE 30TH, 1872

MY DEAR DONNE,

It is quite true, unless Her Majesty should change her mind before my installation, or Atropos cut short my thread, I shall sit in the seat of Jeremie very soon. I went down on Friday to Lincoln, which I had never seen before. I assure you the charms of the actual, surpass those of the imagined Cathedral, and so do those of the Dean's lodgings. Heaven rest the soul of Dr. Ward, whilome Rector of St. James', who in 1849 built the house in which I am to live. I would not have him walk, and give me notice to do the same.

Yr. affect. friend
J. W. BLAKESLEY



J. W. BLAKESLEY

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
DEC. 1 [1872]

MY DEAR DONNE,

. . . . . .

I heard from Mrs. Kemble to-day: a very kind letter; but she only gives "Rome" for address, which leaves me as wide a mark to direct at as before. I shall ask Coutts to tell me. Don't you trouble yourself to write it. She says that her Daughters are coming to England in the Spring, which will save *her* going to America: a double gratification, she says. I think she wants a little *Company* in Rome; but she seems to rejoice in the Place nevertheless.

I am sure I wish—almost wish, that is, that I were there this Winter, which promises to be a cheerless one I think, and I don't manage these long nights so well as formerly.

A Boy comes to read to me for some two hours: stumbling at every other word: and I am off my Grog and Pipe—and positively imbibing homœopathic doses of *Nux Vomica*, and feeling (I scarce dare *say* it) somewhat better, whatever be the cause. "Absit Invidia!"

. . . . . .

Ever yours
E. FG.

W. B. Donne to R. C. Trench

40 WEYMOUTH STREET
PORTLAND PLACE
JUNE 3, 1873

MY DEAR ARCHBISHOP,

. . . . . .

Coals being now so ruinously dear is I suppose the reason why I am going to Newcastle-on-Tyne in a few days to give some lectures there. I hope I shall not prove an owl when I am in the rostrum.

We are all I am thankful to say well, no thanks to the weather, which is as dreeping and dreary as ever that can have been which drenched the old Scotch Minister in Old Charles

Matthew's hands, and who was told for his comfort, he "wad be dree enough when he gat into the Pulpit".

If I live and do not break down meanwhile, I shall have another number of the "Ancient Classics for English Readers" to send you in June. This time a Latin author "Tacitus". Blackwood and Son were so well satisfied with the sale of the "Euripides" that they put me in harness again. I perceive a great improvement in my temper since I published that tiny volume; for during many years (some 25 of them) I have had and cherished a secret wrath against the maligners of that great dramatic poet. Now I am easier in my mind, and more amiable generally.

We all join in very best regards to Mrs. Trench, yourself and all your household.

Believe me ever
Yrs. most affectionately
W. B. DONNE

In 1873 Mr. Donne went for a visit to North Wales, but seems to have strained his heart walking over-quickly uphill, and on his return he was laid up for some time, and never perfectly recovered his usual health.

W. B. Donne to his daughter Valentia

LLANELLY, CARMARTHENSHIRE
JUNE 11, 1873

MY DEAR VALENTIA,

The country round here in every direction is most lovely, and till this morning the weather has been so too. We were to have gone to Carmarthen to-day—Saturday—and to the Bishop of St. Davids' place at Abergwythy, but the wind and rain forbid it; and the Colonel walked himself yesterday off his legs and has not yet made his appearance. We drove about six miles out, and he then put it to me whether we should drive or walk home; and of course I said "walk," and beautiful the walk was, but the Colonel [Stepney] fancied he knew a short cut—and he did so, but it was a cut involving much wading of streams, breaking of fences, and forcing of way through woods —and the result is that one of the perambulators is in bed.

Everybody here is devoted to money-getting, and except the street urchins, who are very handsome, but even more dirty, every one is hard at work. On about 2 acres of the Stepney property stands a vitriol manufactory, an arsenic mill and a tan-yard and the odour is quite peculiar—it is indeed in some measure qualified by an immense grease boiler on the adjoining allotment, and that is agreeably flavoured by a neighbouring churchyard. Amidst these savours lives in perfect health and in anti-Banting plight the French Consul.

With love to all,

Ever yr. affect father
W. B. Donne

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

Market Hill, Woodbridge
July 17, [1873]

My dear Donne,

I ought to have replied sooner to your last; but I have really had nothing to tell but about my sea-faring: which is now very constant though not very far-reaching.

If ever you want a small and pleasant excursion, there is now a daily Steamer from Harwich to Rotterdam; and a very fine Steamer too; which takes People in the best Cabin for 18/- there and back with a week's Interval, if you choose, or, you book all the way from London (by Rail to Harwich) for some 28/- I think.

. . . . . .

When you wrote to me of your Trip to Wales and of your Host there, did I surmise rightly that he was Mr. Sartoris? You did not *name* him as such. Edward Cowell has been home these two months at Ipswich; but I have not yet seen him. He was to have come over here one day, but somehow did not. I hear he looks quite hearty and even handsome: we shall meet before long, I doubt not: perhaps to-morrow, as I have written to him for that purpose.

Have you read Newman's "Apologia"? a deeply interesting

Book, I think; very honest, it seems to me, and with some very fine things in it.

. . . . . .

Ever yours
E. FG.

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

LOWESTOFT
THURSDAY, [1873]

MY DEAR DONNE,

Your Sunday's Letters only reached me here to-day: and bad as my writing implements are, I must send you a few lines to thank you for writing me so long a letter with your own hand. Mowbray had told me of your being unwell after returning from Wales (is it?) and I thought it better to trouble him than you for a report of the amendment which your letter itself tells of. I am sure that you do not need to be told my wishes.

No. I have long known I never could make anything of History, and so have long since given it up: unless it be very like Fiction, I suppose. Mowbray tells me of a good Book about Richelieu, which I shall buy from Mudie.

. . . . . .

With your letter comes one from Frederick Tennyson. His eldest son Julius married a Scotch Lady some while ago—his eldest—I think eldest—daughter is about to marry a Scotchman.

I have written my annual or biennial letter to Alfred, but as yet have not heard from him. When I get home to Woodbridge, I shall be thinking of an Epistle to Mrs. Kemble. I don't know why one finds it so much harder to make up a letter to any such distance as America. One ought to have more to tell; I have not that, and so have the less heart to make up a letter of the Nothings which would do very well if only directed to the next County. I know a little of Venables: remember him very well: I always heard he was a man of more tender heart than he cared to show. The strength of his *head* one could not doubt; but I should judge rather to

argue a given case than with insight into which case is the right.

But I may be all wrong: and no matter whether wrong or right.

Only I am, I know, yours ever

E. FG.

W. B. Donne to R. C. Trench

40 Weymouth St.
Portland Place
August 16, 1873

My dear Archbishop,

Many thanks for Plutarch—that is, for the gift; many more for the pleasure your book has given me, for I have read every word of it. The book is charming. Perhaps without brag or vanity I may claim to be one of the exceptional readers of your lectures. I have for many years, at various times, studied not Plutarch only, but his contemporaries, elder or younger—Epictetus, Seneca, Dion, Chrysostom, and beyond his age, the imperial Stoic also.

I am delighted to find that you hold an opinion in common with one I have long entertained, and indeed cherished. It is, that the character of the Romans under the Empire has been drawn by very unfair hands, and exhibited to us through a very questionable medium—that of a satirical historian, Tacitus; a scandal-loving biographer, Suetonius; a professed satirist, Juvenal; and a writer who lived long after the time of any of them, and under a new order of men and things—Dion Cassius. In the booklet which accompanies this note, you will find occasional glimpses of this opinion, and in sundry review articles I have, in past days, dwelt on it more at large.

Yrs. affectionately

W. B. Donne

How much and often have I thought of you of late, after reading the sad and irreparable loss you have sustained in the Bishop of Winchester![1]

[1] This letter appears in Archbishop Trench's *Memorials*, vol. ii., p. 163. Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Winchester, was killed by a fall from his horse, 19th July, 1873.

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

[1873]

MY DEAR DONNÉ,

I have often been on the point of writing to you, though my Life here furnishes little that is worth your reading: still less worth your answering. But my eyes have been very refractory lately—for the last month, I may say. However, they seem (unaccountably to me) a little brighter to-day, or rather to-night; and I will scribble you a line, which I do not wish you to answer, if you are as busy as I am idle.

The last I heard of yourself direct was in a Saturday Magazine, or Review, with a very agreeable account of Terence, as well as of the Plays of his which Westminster did this Winter. Indirectly, I have read, or heard read, of you in the Papers, about the d——d Censorship: and a letter of yours in my "Daily News" I spell out for myself. Enough of Drama, but then—poor W. B. D. So I will say no more on that head.

I have a new Reader, who goes through Tichborne every night the Tichborne appears. It did my heart good to hear my Boy read out some lines of Alfred Tennyson at the close of the Attorney's Speech last night.

It may seem strange to say that the *only* thing which leaves in me the *least* doubt of the Plaintiff's Imposture is—his charge against his Cousin. For bad as Mankind is, and he among the worst of the kind, I could scarce conceive his being such a Rascal as to bring such a charge only for the purpose of shaking *one* piece of Evidence against him. But I shall perhaps know more to-night when the poor Lady comes into Court.

. . . . . .

I want to write to Mrs. Kemble and shall do so directly if my eyes will let me. Now I must shut them up; I doubt they scarce let me write legibly, for I must write at a Gallop if at all.

So with Love to all yours

Yours always

E. FG.

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
DEC. 7, [1873]

MY DEAR DONNE,

. . . . . .

You must *never* write to me when overdone; I can always hear from Mowbray (from whom I had a very pleasant letter lately) about you and yours. He has writing also to do: but not, I suppose, with such strain of mind at the back of it; besides, he is young; and I don't mind calling him out. He seems very happy with his pleasant wife, and I daresay pleasant little home. It is well you have him near you; for I think he has heart as well as head to be a stay and comfort to you.

I heard from Mrs. Kemble a few days ago—a letter so crossed on thin paper, I could scarce read her MS., and am not sure that I have deciphered all exactly. She speaks of her present course of Readings as her *last;* and having, she says, *vowed* that it is to be so, so I daresay it will be.

She talks of being in England; next summer I think; but whether to remain in England or not, I do not know. I rather think not.

. . . . . .

I was thinking of you and Lord North, etc., reading Walpole's capital "Diary of Events in George II. and III.". Was there ever such a Parliamentary Reporter? and, I believe, in the main just in his estimate of people: Burke, for one: whom I think it has been the fashion to overrate a little since Coleridge's time. The English do not understand Irishmen; such as Burke and Goldsmith. *I think I do!*—Now Alfred Smith is coming here to eat 24 oysters, so good-bye: don't write till easy.

E. FG.

W. B. Donne to the Dean of Hereford

40 Weymouth Street, W.
Portland Place
August 25, 73

Dear Mr. Leigh,[1]

As a very small return for the pleasure my visit to you afforded me, I send by this day's post my book containing the notice of the late Mr. Charles Kemble. It has this merit at least, that of being the only fair account of his real position as a great actor.

For, in his own line, great I maintain him to have been. He insisted always that his Lear, Othello, Richard III., Shylock, etc., were his best parts: but the public did not think so—and "interdum vulgus recte sentit"—certainly in this case.

The thunderstorm last night described by the penny-a-liners as "terrific" was certainly not so in this part of London. On the contrary the thunder was scarcely worth listening to and the lightning of a very mild kind. I have seen better on the stage.

As I understand that Miss F. Smith may be going to Paris; will you kindly tell her, with my best regards, that on the rather improbable supposition of her having no better accommodation in London, we shall be delighted if she will put up at the Weymouth Street (Arms), No. 40—"well-aired beds, tolerable coffee, charges next to nothing—claret sound, and insisted on by the landlord, at least twice in the day. Two barmaids kept, who will show her every attention."

Dr. and Mrs. Wister honoured the Weymouth Arms with their custom. Reference for character (if desired) may be made to Mrs. Kemble.

With very best regards to Mrs. Leigh and yourself—and a lively sense of my visit to Stoneleigh Vicarage, and of my Victory at Croquet!

Believe me, dear Mr. Leigh
Very sincerely yours
W. B. Donne

Compliments to all the dogs and the white cat. I saw two black cats also, but was not introduced to *them*.

[1] The Hon. and Very Reverend James Wentworth Leigh, the present Dean of Hereford, who married Mrs. Kemble's daughter (see note on p. 277), was Vicar of Stoneleigh from 1864 to 1873.

Mrs. Fanny Kemble to Blanche Donne

ATHERSTONE MANOR HOUSE
SUNDAY, 23RD

MY DEAR BLANCHE,

Your little Fred[1] is a charming child, and I enjoyed our Hansom back in the mud and the rain quite as much as he did, and am very much obliged to you for having let him come to me. I was distressed to see your father at the door when we returned the other morning, and hope he took no cold from Fred's inrush accompanied with so much damp air. Ask that young Reprobate if he told his Grandfather my opinion of a lad who likes cold salt beef better than fried eggs for breakfast—whose soul abhors marmalade and all kinds of jam (more than soles)—who does not wish to be crushed under a steam roller, and who calls Geese (in the frantic freedom of conversation) *Gooses*. *Such a Boy* indeed it is to be hoped *are few*. Tell him I send that sentence for him to parse, construe, and turn into English.

Kindest love to your father and every good wish now and for the coming year to all of you.

Affectionately yours
FANNY KEMBLE

Mrs. Fanny Kemble to W. B. Donne

1812 RITTENHOUSE SQUARE
PHILADELPHIA
NOV. 16TH, [1873]

MY DEAR FRIEND,

We arrived safely on this side of the Atlantic last month and I was purposing writing to you to tell you of our welfare when the miserable news of my poor sister's calamity reaching me in the newspapers upwards of a week ago, has left me hardly a thought for anything else since. I have had a few most pathetic and piteous lines from my poor sister telling me of her child's death, but no details, beyond the fall from his horse and the kick received on the temple from the struggling animal.[2] I think I gather that the poor fellow survived a week,

[1] Frederick E. Mowbray Donne, son of Major Frederick Donne.
[2] Greville Sartoris was killed by a fall from his horse, 23rd October, 1873.

but whether he retained or recovered consciousness I do not know.

How many thanks I owe you for that delightful book "Gryll Grange"—it is almost a poem, and is so full of pleasant fancy and smart imagination—it cheered and charmed my sea-sorrow and I blessed you for it all the while I read.

. . . . . .

Yrs. affect.
FANNY KEMBLE

. . . . . .

W. B. Donne to J. W. Blakesley

40 WEYMOUTH ST.
PORTLAND PLACE W.
JANUARY 31ST, 1874

MY DEAR DEAN,

We were all truly grieved at your being sent away on Thursday Evening by our revelry. The fact is that our turn for a Shakespearian Reading had so often been postponed—in May last, by my being extremely busy, and since November, by my being not quite myself, we could not put it off any longer. I was not the worse for it, one reason for which may be, that in the Reading I took a very little part, partly because in my own house I always content myself with being stage-manager, but principally on this occasion because Mr. Beard[1] (the doctor) has laid an interdict on me as to lecturing or spouting, so although Job was in some sort banqueting with his sons and daughters, he was not doing anything deserving the demolition of his house, or the carrying off his cattle. Moreover it was Job's farewell benefit, as all Shakespeare's readable plays have been read, some before I joined the society, others since. I am not sorry to retire. . . .

I cut down "Henry V." very successfully, and including feeding time—tea and supper—the house was cleared by a quarter before midnight. When I read the part of "Coriolanus"—owing to the lack of excision—I expected like Caius Marcius to be borne off

[1] Frank Carr Beard, the friend and medical adviser of Wilkie Collins and Charles Dickens.

on a bier, not because I had so much to say, but from the length of the reading. I am mending decidedly, yet am enjoined to make much of myself for some time to come.

. . . . . .

Ever yours
W. B. DONNE

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

40 WEYMOUTH ST.
JAN., 1874

A. T. Malkin says he "wants a new pair of legs". Yet, I don't think, though I am willing to exchange these members with him—my pair being shaky—he will take my offer. He was here on Thursday last, when we had a *Shakespearian Reading*, "being positively the last" at No. 40, for I am cautioned against spouting either in Lecture Rooms, or at Readings in future. I took only very slight parts, about, on an average, 3 lines in each—and no harm done; and I managed, also without prejudice, to sit up, as host, until the chimes went midnight. But I conceal this aberration from (medical) virtue from Dr. Beard. The fact is my turn to hold a Reading here had been so long postponed, that, out of mere shame and courtesy, I felt bound to give tea, supper and Shakespeare to the company.

'Tis however "my farewell benefit". It was lucky for me that this *dilapidation* in my system did not take place in '70, '71, '72, '73: for then I should have lost some hundreds of, pounds for work done and remunerated.

There—this is the best letter I can devise: excuse its dulness, of which you will not be more sensible than the writer is.

With best love to the three Wisters—and with as much of that article as you can find room for in your home and heart to yourself.

Ever affectionately yours
W. B. DONNE

Feminine as well as masculine love intended to all.

If Mrs. Wister is still living in that garden of Eden, described so picturesquely in her last—and I maintain it to be her last—letter to me, I do not wonder at her not writing to any one.

I do not suppose that Adam or Eve were good correspondents—marry, their earthly acquaintances were few in number: and they could tell what news there was in Paradise when Raphael or Gabriel, as they did occasionally, made a morning call. Moreover, our general mother, though she flirted with ———, cannot have had any gossips, and so, few materials, if any for correspondence. It required a Fate to produce a Lady Mary Montagu, or a Mdme. du Sevigné.

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

FEBRUARY 1ST, 1874

. . . I fancy that E. FG. [Ed. FitzGerald] told you that I had been out of gear. He seems indeed to have taken in hand the announcement of this prodigy to all and sundry of his and my common friends. For which employment of his ample leisure a judgment has fallen on him! He has been thrust out of the lodgings that he has so long occupied, and is now constrained to dwell in the very pretty and comfortable house he long since built and furnished for himself, but never until now occupied—with the exception of one night, when he had the "horrors". This fall from not very commodious or comfortable quarters is, like the fall of man, a woman's work. His landlord, a small and meek man, though dealing in deadly weapons, guns, pistols, etc., and though a widower, again rushes into wedlock, and whereas his deceased wife was a thin thread-paper sort of person, he has now taken to himself a widowed giantess of at least 15 stone I hear, strong in arm, mighty in tongue, and in short stalwart enough to turn E. FG. out of doors! . . .

I shall be able to record my vote for *Tom Brown alias* Thomas Hughes—who won't come in—but I shall not, as I have always done on every former occasion, go 119 miles to poll for Gurdon at Dereham, Norfolk. Disraeli, when he rearranged my native country, just before 1868, acting under the advice of one who knew the land well, so managed as to make it nearly impossible for a Liberal candidate ever again to come in for any one of these divisions. . . .

40 WEYMOUTH STREET, PORTLAND PLACE
FEBRUARY 1, 1874

AUT CÆSAR AUT NULLUS

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

MAY 21ST, 1874

. . . Having fallen, in comparison with poor John, on evil days and evil tongues also, in regard of Plays, I have an amount of business composition that would have startled him and made him perhaps swear as terribly as our armies did in Flanders. Yesterday only 18 letters. I began to swear terribly at the 15th—and yet (hypocritically) I cut d—ns out of the Plays!—much writing of the kind renders every one more or less a Pharisee: whereas my tendencies are all Sadducean. . . .

One comfort is left me: though I *write* uneasily I *read* "from morn to dewy eve" comfortably: and, having abandoned periodicals, I have the privilege and the pleasure of reviving my acquaintance with old friends, and am gradually becoming far less ignorant than I was six months ago. As I go out nowhere at present I cannot tell you any news. The Emperor of Russia has been here, but he might as well, for aught I saw of him, have been in Siberia. He was carefully guarded by policemen, seeing that there are many Poles in London, and by a Pole he was shot at when he visited Paris. Such are the privileges of Kings and Kaisers. We did not make so much of the Czar as of the Shah of Persia last year. The latter was evidently considered as a character in the "Arabian Nights".

. . . I have a new *chef*, Marquis of Hertford—*vice* Earl Sydney, and a very nice nobleman he is: though I am so used to the Earl that I always regret his loss. We are greatly plagued by the French Managers who are not unnaturally anxious to introduce into London the more popular dramas in France: and these unluckily turn for the most part on breaches of the 7th Commandment. Favart is now acting here: but "La Sphinx" is not a good play for her. It is below her in quality, and she too old for the part that has made Croisette the goddess of the hour. It seems to me that dramatic genius is very much on the decline in Paris. It has but one theme, and that adultery or demi-monde-ism.

40 WEYMOUTH STREET, PORTLAND PLACE, W.
MAY 21, 1874

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

LITTLE GRANGE, WOODBRIDGE
JUNE 15

MY DEAR DONNE,

. . . . . .

I should hardly have had courage to write across the Atlantic to Mrs. Kemble if I had not wished to tell her what I knew of *yourself;* and she has been really glad and grateful for that little service. Her last letter (Answer of course) was dated from Philadelphia: May 18 (I think). She then speaks of a very mild Winter: then, after some cold, of a very sudden Spring, changing dead wood into Green as with a Harlequin's wand, she said. She was only dreading the Summer heat which always tries her in America; perhaps it had come upon her since she wrote and so made her ill. I had written to her again, perhaps my letter (addressed Philadelphia) will find her wherever she may be gone; and if so, you know she *will* answer however little inclined to do so.

I may have told Mowbray that R. Groome called on me after holding forth in our Church at his Visitation. How little he looks altered in Body, or Mind these 30 or 40 years! We had a shot at some Suffolk Words at which he went with his old gusto as if he were no Archdeacon at all.

When I was at Lowestoft, I had to resort to a Circulating Library, where there were but few, and those tattered, books to circulate. The Prime Minister's "Sybil" I found heavy and strange thing for him—ditto Lord Lytton: so I fastened on "Bleak House," and thanked God for it and Dickens! Then I bought at the Railway Stall "Elsie Venner" by O. W. Holmes; very well worth reading, absurd as the motive is, and disproportionate as the Narrative. Holmes is I think a Man of Genius. I believe I never could read Hawthorne's Stories.

Ste. Beuve has given me a desire to try "Gil Blas" once again; which I never could get on with: an odd thing to myself. This time I will begin in the middle and so back if I get to the end. Ste. Beuve quotes some one saying of the Moral of the Story —"It is as Moral as Experience"—well said! I am thinking of

once more trying "Corneille," whom also I have failed with heretofore.

You see, my dear old Friend, what stuff my letters must be made of; but I remain with Love to all yours,

Yours ever
E. FG.

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

[A FRAGMENT]

[JUNE, 1874]

Wait! I have one little thing to tell you, which, little as it is, is worth all the rest, if you don't know already.

Borrow—has got back to his own Oulton Lodge. My Nephew, Edmund Kerrich, now Adjutant to some Volunteer Battalion, wants a house *near* not *in*, Lowestoft: and got some Agent to apply for Borrow's—who sent word that he is himself there—an old Man—wanting Retirement, etc. This was the account Edmund got.

I saw in some Athenæum a somewhat contemptuous notice of G. B.'s "Rommany Lil" or whatever the name is. I can easily understand that B. should not meddle with *science* of any sort; but some years ago he would not have liked to be told so, however Old Age may have cooled him now.

I expect my Nieces here in a week; and am meditating a visit to Edinburgh and Abbotsford! only to see where Sir Walter was, and walk about. . . .

I have vol. iii. of Forster's Dickens here; but I keep it for my Reader to deal out to me. "Don Quixote" was my companion during Bronchitis, which has retired into its Closet for awhile. I suppose we shall have the last of Bacon some day.

In 1874 the office of Examiner of Plays was remodelled and new duties were required of the Licenser. Mr. Donne felt that his health would not allow him to carry these out conscientiously and therefore resigned the post, after having held it for seventeen years.

Among other things it was imperative that the Censor of Plays should sometimes visit the theatres during the time of the performances, and this the doctor had strictly forbidden Mr. Donne to do.

It is pleasant to read the many letters which reached him when his resignation was known, all testifying to the tact and courtesy with which he had carried out his duties. Lord Hertford, the head of the Lord Chamberlain office, says: "I am sorry to lose you, and should have tried hard to keep you if you had been able to get out of a night". Mr. Spencer Ponsonby, Mr. Donne's official chief, writes: "Nothing has been pleasanter to me, in my whole official experience, than my relations with you—and I feel the breach of them deeply and sincerely". But to so loyal a subject as W. B. Donne it was most of all gratifying to receive the following letter, dated 5th August, 1874, from Buckingham Palace:—

DEAR MR. DONNE,

The time having arrived for the termination of your connection with the Queen's Household as Examiner of Plays, Her Majesty desires me to notify to you, that it is with great regret her Majesty feels called upon to name your successor. The Queen cannot allow you to retire without expressing her appreciation of the manner in which you have performed a most arduous and delicate duty, and have thereby rendered a service of the greatest importance to the Queen and to the public.

I am very truly yours
T. BIDDULPH

As an Examiner Mr. Donne was extremely particular as to what plays he licensed, and several cartoons appeared in the illustrated papers at his expense. It is said he never allowed the word "God" to appear, and a story is told of a gentleman calling on him and finding him seated with his children looking over manuscripts. As he entered he heard a voice say, "Here's another God, father," and the answer, "Very well, my dear, cross Him out and put 'heaven' as usual".

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble.

AUG. 25, 1874

. . . But I do abdicate this very 25th of August. To-day's "Gazette" will announce the appointment of my successor, Mr. F. Pigott: "le Roi est mort—Vive le Roi".

And my abdication is not without its pleasures. The Queen, by the pen of her Privy-Purse-Keeper, Sir T. M. Biddulph, has

sent me a very kind message of regret at my resignation and of satisfaction with my jurisdiction during my reign of 17 years. The Managers of Theatres are sending very kind tokens of regret and goodwill, and I am awarded for life a larger retiring pension than I looked for, *viz.*, £350 per annum. So, although there will be a shortening of my income, I need not send the hat round to my friends and acquaintance.

Early in this month I passed four more pleasant days at Warsash. I like the little (for she is short of stature) "American Princess" very much, and it is most pleasant to behold her demeanour to your sister.[1] She (Mrs. Sartoris) has exercised her usual magical genius in converting what was an ordinary farmhouse into a most comfortable and beautifully decorated abode —and a few fields into a most pleasant garden and grounds. She started with no other advantage—no mean one indeed—than a good supply of noble trees. The rest is the work of her own skilful hands.

BELLE VUE, FILEY, YORKSHIRE
AUGUST 25, 1874

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

LITTLE GRANGE
WOODBRIDGE
SEPT. 4, 1874

MY DEAR DONNE,

I am very glad you are well out of the Examiner's Office, which I am sure will grow more and more troublesome to the holder, so long as it lasts—which probably won't be long.

. . . . . .

Spedding's last vol., noble as it is in all respects, leaves me pretty much where it found me so far as Bacon himself is concerned. Of course I recognized part of the last fine pages as being in the Macaulay "Evenings". I cannot but fancy that while Spedding has undoubtedly, by his work, elevated Bacon from the "wisest meanest," etc., he has somewhat qualified his own admiration for him. I have not yet written to acknowledge the receipt of the Book, for I scarce knew how to do without

[1] Mrs. Sartoris' son Algernon married the daughter of General Grant, President of the United States.

some remarks, however little Spedding cares for it: and I should have committed the double offence of praising *him* the more, but not his Hero, in whose service he has spent 40 years. I must however write something: and I hope in better MS. than this: which is shameful. I will reform immediately.

I have been backward and forward to Lowestoft where I have Nephews and Nieces. It is an ugly place enough: ugly sands, ugly sea, etc., but has some Business going on, and plenty of Shipping on the move. I suppose you will scarce visit Norfolk this year. And yet, now that you are out of harness, why not? On second thought, I think you will.

I wish you would remember me very kindly to Blakesley who was always very kind to me: and I think I may venture some kind remembrance to Mrs. Blakesley also. You and yours do not need, I hope, to be assured that I am yours and theirs

Always and truly

E. FG.

Yes: Airy[1] died—after a few hours' Illness just arrived on a visit to one of his Biddell Cousins at Lavenham, in Suffolk.

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
SEPT. 20, [1874]

MY DEAR DONNE,

I found your letter on my return from Lowestoft yesterday. There I had been for a week (very cold) with the Cowell's: and thither I return in a few days, to be with them till the second week of October, I suppose. You see therefore that I am to be found—and glad to be found by you—any time that suits you: perhaps all the better, if at Lowestoft, while the Cowell's are there. You have only to let me know the when and where and I shall be ready.

The first man I met on Lowestoft Pier was the Dean of Ely [Merivale], whom after looking at, I did not recognize till he told me his name. I had not seen him (except for a passing glimpse on the Railway platform) for 20 years. We had three

[1] William Airy, brother of Astronomer Royal, a schoolfellow of E. FG. Rector of Keysoe. See p. 8.

or four strolls on the Pier together; he seemed bored by the place; but consoled himself by the thought that his penance was not for long. Indeed he goes home to-day I think—after a Fortnight's exile.

. . . . . .

Cowell was to have been with us by the beginning of August, but his wife thought he was very ill with overwork, and had better go off with his Mother to Devonshire. As I knew that she would have gone herself had there been any real Illness (which she did not) I thought little of the matter: and here (at Lowestoft) is Cowell as well as ever, and laughing at his wife's overwrought accounts of him.

He has now taken to Botany, which is good inasmuch as it drives him walking out of doors.

You do not mention Mowbray in your letter, whom I wanted to know about. But do not write to tell me about him: he will, I doubt not, let me hear of himself before long. I suppose he is out Holyday-making.

Pollock wrote me from Clovelly, N. Devon, with which he is much pleased, and Miladi also.

Woolner with wife and children are lodging at Felixstowe; and he has been over here yesterday and to-day.

. . . . . .

Spedding has never written to me, but I am his as yours

E. FG.

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25

(On the mud between Woodbridge and the river mouth)

MY DEAR DONNE,

I found your letter on going home yesterday, and reply to it as dated above. I don't work Ship and Man on a Sunday; but my Captain's wife is fast dying, and as he chose to return to his home on a Sunday, I thought no harm in going along with him. So here the Judgment comes upon us: *he* went down to Breakfast, his nephew took the helm, and quite conscientiously (poor fellow) steered us so high on the mud, that it must be a very good tide to take us off in 12 hours. We

James Spedding, whose forty years of labour over the *Life of Lord Bacon* were now ended, is the author of the following lines, published many years ago in *Fraser's Magazine*, which by permission of Miss Spedding I am able to reproduce :—

When I was a freshman old age did appear
A reverend and beautiful thing;
For knowledge must gather as year follows year
And wisdom from knowledge should spring.
But I found that the years that supplied me with knowledge
Took the power to digest it away,
And let out all the stores I had gathered at college
Thro' leaks that increased every day;
And I said it, and think not I said it in jest,
For you'll find it is true to the letter,
That the only thing old people ought to know best
Is that young people ought to know better.

Mrs. Fanny Kemble to W. B. Donne

MENTONE
WED., NOV. 6TH, 1874 (?)

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am grieved to hear of anything ailing your eyes. My sister had gout in hers some time ago and suffered much with it. I think, however, that she got the better of it, and I trust you will do so also; for the affection of the Memory, the total impossibility of recalling names of people and places, I know alas no remedy—if I had one for my own need in that kind I would share it with you, but that malady belongs to the Anno Domini Class, and for them I know no cure but patience and the assistance of the conviction that they cannot last very long.

I am coming shortly homewards—after my autumn wanderings. I expect to be ten days here and then perhaps as many in Paris, where I hope to meet my daughter Mrs. Leigh, and I shall return with her to Leamington and stay with her during her husband's absence in America, that is, till the beginning of the New Year, after which I expect to come to London and look out in that large city for some place of abode for my small self. I have not had a line or heard a word from Edward FitzGerald lately, which, considering his usual expansive demonstrativeness to his friends, makes me feel as if I was a special object of his neglect.

I never look at a newspaper and so know nothing of the Public Thing—as the French call their national affairs. Is Queen Victoria still on the throne of England? and is the *Ebrew Jew* novel-writer still Prince Viriée of that Turkish dependency? Has anybody eaten Turkey since it was beaten by Bears? and was it Dindon aux truffes or Dindon aux chataignes?—either are better than Turkey pure and simple as it was when last I heard of it—I forget how long ago. God bless you, my dear friend. I hope it will not be very long before we meet again.

Yr. affect. friend
F. KEMBLE

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

LITTLE GRANGE, WOODBRIDGE
Nov. 13, [1874]

MY DEAR DONNE,

I have been looking everywhere for a letter from Mrs. Kemble which I wanted to send you; it shall be sent when it turns up: meanwhile here is my own to go without it.

Her letter was chiefly to tell me of a creditable Anecdote of Macready and her Father, in their days of Rivalry: Macready coming to Charles Kemble confessing his Jealousy (about some Part in a Play at Covent Garden) and asking to shake hands after his Confession. She had written that she wished Pollock knew of this, so wrote it to me, and I have lost the Letter. However, I don't suppose Pollock could have made use of it (as he himself doubted), inasmuch as he is not writing a Biography of Macready, but only Editing his Journals, etc.

I suppose the Book is in the Printer's hands; but I have not heard of Pollock this long while—perhaps for that very reason.

I have had a long (dictated) letter from Carlyle in reply to my yearly, or ½ yearly inquiry, in which I also told him of my Edinburgh journey. He does not so much disapprove of my Pilgrimage to Abbotsford considering that I admire Edinburgh so well—as I really do, for I find I have a hankering to visit it again. But the main of Carlyle's letter is a *rhapsody* about Spedding's Bacon; which he extols above any Book in this last Generation: Spedding himself "invincible and victorious".

Bacon no great Sinner, of an "opulent and indeed magnificent Intellect," etc. Though allowing all this I cannot think it was worth 40 years of Spedding's Life—the World having pretty well agreed before as to the amount of Bacon's Intellect and Culpability; no, nor taking into account also Spedding's admirable "History of the Times" as not very critical in England's History; yet I rejoice in Carlyle's opinion which will overweigh all that of the obdurate World. I am sure that Thompson would be glad of this, too, so I sent him the Letter, which he wished to copy, and I told him to keep.

I doubt not there is a little of Carlyle's spirt of contradiction in all this. He saw the wicked World inclining to condemn, or neglect both the Philosophers; and Carlyle hates the World more than Bacon. But I repeat I am delighted that he feels and speaks as he does; the wicked World will go its way, and come to the right conclusion.

. . . . . .

There was a disagreeably pert and ignorant Review of what the Reviewer called "the excellent Crabbe" in October "Cornhill". . . . Only this morning I was reading a whole page (one of a dozen) which might be Molière's. Pray turn to it before this Letter is out of your hands; "The Widow" in "Tales of the Hall": her answer to her third husband that is to be—beginning:—

> Well—she would protest
> This was a Letter prettily exprest.

But indeed the Suitor's Letter is so good. And at the end of *her* letter of expostulation—simply,

"*The Marriage followed*"

"the excellent Crabbe" indeed, in whom one may look in vain for an "Epigram"! Why, there is one and I could quote hundreds.

Mowbray tells me you have had a touch of Cold; so have I, showing me that Bronchitis is ready if one neglects it. Give my Love to the two Daughters and believe me ever yours,

E. FG.

Are you going to move? and whither? I think you will stay where you are.

Edward FitzGerald to Blanche Donne

12 MARINE TERRACE
LOWESTOFT
FEB. 23, 1875

MY DEAR BLANCHE,

. . . . . .

I wrote to Mowbray two or three days ago to tell him that I have lost a brother as well as he—Peter his name; my elder by a year and half or so. He died of Bronchitis at Bournemouth ten days ago; suddenly, though he had suffered several years from the Disease. So he lived and wintered at Cannes till this very hard Winter of all, when he let his house there and tried to weather it out in England, and this is the result.

. . . . . .

All this I wrote to Mowbray knowing that he would tell your Father if he saw fit. Your Father knew Peter from a Boy, and is so affectionately attached to old Remembrances that I thought better not to write to *him* on the subject, when he was himself unwell, and suffering under his present loss.[1] He may believe that he is remembered by me with as much love as I entertain for any one, whether Kinsman or Friend.

. . . . . .

I am very glad you do not blame me for sending your letter at once to Mrs. Kemble. She speaks about your Father in almost every letter and I am sure is as fond of him as of any Friend alive—as she has reason to be. Valentia knows, I hope, that she shares with you in all my best Regards; who am yours and hers (your Father's I need not say)

Ever and truly
E. FG.

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

JAN., 1875

. . . As for birthdays they will keep adding to the sum; they will not, there being no Isaiah on earth to put the hand

[1] W. B. Donne had just lost his youngest son Frederick, who died 3rd February, 1875.

of our dials backward, recede; they are "very tolerable" and must be "endured". I am, and have long been, a disciple of that excellent philosopher, Corporal Nym—and admit with him that "things must be as they may". . . .

If you see the English newspapers, you are aware that statesmen are becoming theologians, and the most interesting topics of the day are such as relate to the meaning of words or ceremonies connected with the Communion. Mr. Gladstone, apparently because he is engaged in the composition of a religious pamphlet, retires from the leadership of the Opposition. I am not altogether sorry that he so retires for a while. It serves his partisans right for partially deserting and constantly thwarting him in 1872-3. Few things are more remarkable at present than the sudden resuscitation of names and doctrines, long supposed dead—for example—Professor Tyndale in August last, at Belfast, re-introduced Democritus to the world—he and his atoms, and both were worth unburying. Next Professor Huxley brought Descartes to the front again, very deservedly—not exactly accompanied by atoms, but by concealed forces—much the same thing. Both these canonized "savans" were accounted atheists in their day; and so now are their resurrection-men, Tyndale and Huxley; and it is very comfortable for the "Bishops and Curates" to have again such monsters to denounce from the pulpit. Again, by this controversy about Bread and Wine, Abelard (not Eloise at present, she will come back to earth with Woman Suffrage) and the old feuds of Nominalists and Realists are once more alive and kicking. So little new is there under the sun: we have indeed seen so little of that luminary for many weeks, that it is not an abuse of scepticism to doubt whether there is such a person—whether indeed he is not a *Mrs. Harris* of the firmament. Your late acquaintance Charles Greville has bequeathed to this generation memoirs most amusing, and scandalous also. The Queen, I am told, though not holding in high esteem her uncle George IV. is wroth with the deceased and his editor H. Reeve.

Mrs. Fanny Kemble to W. B. Donne

WARNFORD COTTAGE
BISHOP'S WALTHAM
WED., 15, [1875]

MY DEAR MR. DONNE,

I should have rejoiced to have been able to join our friends and Edward FitzGerald's paragons, the Cowells, when they met at your house, but I have become a country mouse and come up to Town only to work.

I am engaged to give ten readings at the Marylebone Institute between the 2nd of March and 27th April—but at the rate of one and two readings a week only—so that I should be able probably to accept the employment you so kindly offer me if it is not in London (while I read for the Marylebone, of course I must not read elsewhere in London) and provided I could make the days suit so as not to interfere with theirs, which is always Wednesday or Thursday.

Charles Greville's "Memoirs" will be one of the most generally interesting books published for a long time. I have seen some of it, and cannot imagine a book likely to be received with more curiosity and read with more avidity; it is full of everything and everybody of his time.

. . . . . .

Yr. affect. friend
FANNY KEMBLE

Mrs. Fanny Kemble to W. B. Donne

FLORENCE
NOV. 29TH

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am here on my way to Rome whither I go to-morrow, and here also are Sarah and her husband and boy, also about to go on to Rome. Whenever Sarah and I are together you are pretty sure to be affectionately remembered, spoken of, and wished for. The day before yesterday was my sixty-third birthday, on which, thinking of many things, I naturally thought of the friends who from my girlhood have been faithful and kind to me, and of you, who are among my earliest friends—among my first and last—for few of them now remain.

I have been an old woman for some years past, but have now begun to feel my age—travelling has become more fatiguing and less pleasant than it used to be, and either in England or America henceforward I think I must contemplate being guest in some settled residence.

Mrs. Fanny Kemble to W. B. Donne

WARNFORD
TUESDAY, 27

I am disgusted with you, my dear friend, and have nothing else to pour upon your head, but I hope it will make your hair grow that you may have some to tear reading, what I repeat, that I am disgusted with you. Didn't I forbid my Flyman (Beelzebub, King of the flies, fetch him!) to take your money? Didn't I forbid you to make him disobey me? Isn't my name Fanny Kemble? and can't I—no I can't—"swallow this darn'd plum!" You are very bad, Mr. Donne, too bad indeed—and your note full of texts only reminds me that the Devil can quote Scripture. I have nothing more to say to you. Instantly on your departure and to console myself for it I seised up the Inventory of the sickly and infirm furniture of this house and began to verify it—to put my house, in short, in order. The next fortnight will be full of disorder, discomfort, disorganisation, disconnection, disintegration, disseverance—parting and departing—a hateful process, but one which, God help us, is none other than life itself. Farewell. It is a very bright moonlight and a very high wind; both I think affect my wits *which* I therefore write incoherently—to speak Gamp. I am sad and so write nonsense to keep up my spirit.

Affectly. yours
FANNY KEMBLE

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

MARCH 21, 1875

Whereas I have written (with my own hand) an article for the "Edinburgh Review," revised it, and sent it off washed and clear-starched for the printers;

And whereas I have this day made out a draft for Charles's guidance in some parochial business in Faversham;

Also whereas I am very much better, I think I may write a reply, and many thanks in it, to your last most kind and affectionate letter.

I thought it very likely that E. FG. might forestall me in informing you of poor Frederick's death, but am glad that my letter came so close on the heels of his. . . . Preparing for our departure from this house, in June next, I am doing the very thing which, in days of yore, caused Ahithophel to hang himself—that is, I am "setting my house in order"—and beginning the task of sorting and arranging an infinity of letters—setting apart those which are to be treasured—all of yours in this lot from the time of your first visit to me at Bury unto this day, laid up in lavender—and those which are to be committed to waste-basket, thence to the mills to be converted into pulp for new paper and the correspondents or writers of hereafter. My Kembleian stores are large—besides your share, your sister's, John's—and a few of your father's also. Since you heard from me, another of my friends has departed—Arthur Helps. Did you know him? Of late years, our paths being devious, I have not often seen him, but at one time we were very intimate—and we, I may say without boasting on my side, greatly esteemed each other. After all his labours, official and literary, it is sad to hear that Helps left next to nothing for his wife and children. I knew as long ago as 1867 that he was much embarrassed in his money matters. He had gone into some very unlucky ventures, not of the ordinary kind, but of the philanthropic. On his estate near Botley (Hants) he in an evil hour lighted upon some very beautiful white clay—such as china manufacturers most covet. He built a large house, *i.e.*, dormitory with an eating-room and recreation-room, a chapel and school for his workmen—in short, built and did everything needful, except caring for the most needful of all, *i.e.*, obtaining a short branch railway from the pits to Botley Station for the conveyance of the fine clay. The House of Commons refused an act for the railway and Helps sank in the Speculation some £13,000. He was, when the one dwelt

at Adlestone and the other at Weybridge, very intimate with your brother John. . . .

Purblind as I am, and have long been as regards any distance of view, I am able to read without glasses. I am going over and often through again the old books I loved in my youth, and so far am in a blissful state of conservative ignorance. But I find Homer and Sir Thomas Browne, Virgil and Gibbon, Dante and the Greek Tragedians, more attractive than works all the world outside *me* is devouring, blaming or extolling.

MARCH 21, 1875
40 WEYMOUTH STREET, W., PORTLAND PLACE

Mrs. Fanny Kemble to W. B. Donne

PHILADELPHIA

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I rejoice in the comfortable and comforting letter I have just received from you—most especially in the article for the "Edinburgh" which I suppose is a Review of Pollock's "Macready" Memoir—as I heard you were likely to perform that piece of criticism.

I have no more opinion of a man's being deprived late in years of what has been his lifelong mental, than of what has been his lifelong physical, stimulus, and think giving up writing *altogether* must be as bad for you, as giving up drinking *altogether* must be for men of opposite habits from yours.

I did not know Sir Arthur Helps, though I did know at one time that he and John were upon terms of friendly intimacy. I have never been able to be enthusiastic about his "Dialogues," though I liked his first book, "The Friends in Council," extremely. I think he must have been a very pleasant intimate and friend. Who will now be Clerk of the Council? not assuredly Henry Reeve, but I should think the sale of Charles Greville's "Memoirs" enough to console him for anything—almost for their publication. The book has made a great stir and been republished here, where however the astonishment created by it as the "Diary of a Gentleman" might almost strike one as a very severe criticism—the very severest—indeed upon it.

I am well enough only older, and blinder, and deafer (not *dumber* which is a pity) every day.

. . . . . .

Yr. affectte. friend
FANNY KEMBLE

Mrs. Fanny Kemble to W. B. Donne

BEAU RIVAGE, OUCHY
JULY 31, 75

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I was thinking the other day that our intercourse had much dwindled and that I wished it were not so, for I do not at all believe that the goodwill we bear each other has done so, and your kind letter from Ascot confirms me in the belief and even I think bears witness to a very pretty degree of sympathy, since it is evident that we were both thinking of each other instead of forgetting to do so.

My thinking of you has been indeed rather more than less than usual lately—for I have been looking over and making extracts from letters to my friend Harriet St. Leger early in 1830-31, and I have been living back the time when we were all young—you were quite lately married. I was yesterday reading a long letter of mine to H. St. Leger describing "*Dick Trench's*" visit to us on his return from his mad Spanish expedition with John—and all his solemnly comical details of their "revolutionary woe" with Torrijos for their chieftain.

My travelling in Switzerland this year has been a bitter mockery—my servant, the picture of health and strength, became ill, and almost as soon as we reached Lausanne took to his bed, where he has been for three weeks with low fever, and my Swiss summer has therefore spent itself in this beautiful place which is made horrible by bad company, rowdy men and women —noise, riot, vulgarity, flashy gentility, incessant drumming and blowing of bad music, and all the abominations of a bad style of watering-place. My poor servant is just able to move and I shall try and get him into higher air as soon as possible.

. . . . . .

Yr. affect. friend
FANNY KEMBLE

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

1875

. . . I extracted a letter from Ed. FitzGerald lately—and am sorry to say one that talks of some infirmity in his health. He describes himself as weak "above and below"—that is, "in head and ankles". We have just now within walking distance of each other Dr. Congrieve, the High Priest of the Comtistes and Positivists in England. He is a very agreeable philosopher, but I do not pretend to understand some of his social or religious doctrines. In that respect I am on a par with a large majority of Englishmen: for I believe he has not a hundred Comtistes in his regiment, and already some of them, if they are not belied, are *dissenters*. We get on very well together, neither preaching to the other, nor stamping on each other's toes. Perhaps I flatter myself, but I think I am easy to get on with when mated with an enthusiast or a philosopher. I listen with pleasure to both, and with equal pleasure keep silence.

E. FG. concludes that I have read and relished certain productions of J. Spedding's, recently published in "Fraser's Magazine". But though I may very likely admire when I read, I have not "Fraser" at hand; nor indeed any books here excepting an odd volume of the "Æneid," which I can read at all times and seasons, and three numbers of the "Fortnightly Review". Moreover this same Spedding I have not seen by'r lakin for more than a twelvemonth. I am "out of Society's reach"—not that I have been sent to Coventry, or am just out of gaol—by reason that dinners, "swarries," late hours and hot rooms do not agree with me; and so, when in London, I am nevertheless out of *Town*. I fancy that few folks are more obedient to medical injunctions than I am—*when* they please me. "I am," like Sir Anthony Absolute, "compliance itself when I am not thwarted"—and I hate, and always hated, putting on my best, or even second best clothes at 10 in the evening. Wherefore I obey and laud the Doctor. . . .

1875

MABLE COTTAGE, ASCOT

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

SEPT. 13, 1875

Last Wednesday evening Valentia and I carried out long-ago made intentions to go to the Court Theatre, and see Harry's[1] performances. We had heard, and read also, most favourable reports of him, and now we can fully endorse both the oral and the written tradition. In his line he is an admirable actor. He has quite conquered his lisp: his voice is clear and harmonious —powerful also when required—*that* Charles, who saw him at Drury Lane theatre, had already told me. Very humorous, he is always the gentleman; and in that virtue reminds me of an old story. Richard Jones, whom you may recollect at Covent Garden theatre, was wont to say of Liston that "even when he took out his pocket handkerchief to blow his nose, he always did so like a gentleman". I think there can be no doubt that the youngster has made his mark. Mr. Hamilton Aidée is bringing out a new play (comedy) at the "Court"; I hope he has provided a good part for Harry. He is the very ideal of an old butler—*Binns* his name. In the playing-in piece he had more scope—and his "short" and severe husband was capital. . . .

As to myself I am quite unobjectionable—this comes of having a pension from the State and nothing to do. "I am," as Charles Lamb said of himself after retiring, pensioned, from the India House, "Retired leisure".

1875,
40 WEYMOUTH ST., W., PORTLAND PLACE

. . . Public attention, if we may judge from the columns of newspapers, is divided between the Prince of Wales's visit to India—and a most brutal murder committed more than a year ago in Whitechapel. The Bishop of Lincoln—a nephew of Wordsworth the poet—has composed for the use of Ich Dien a form of prayer, in which he urges him to preach the gospel to the Hindoos. . . .

OCTOBER 10, 1875
40 WEYMOUTH STREET, W., PORTLAND PLACE

[1] Henry Kemble the actor, grandson of Charles Kemble.

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

FEB. 6, 1876

. . . Our great pleasure during my seclusion has been reading your contributions to the "Atlantic Monthly". I am delighted with your mention of E. FitzGerald. It is good to draw out of his hole such a badger as he is. Next I am charmed with the recollections of the past which you recall. How well do I remember the pleasant days I passed at your dwelling in James Street, Buckingham Gate. I never have forgotten that week or by'r lakin, I think, ten days, still those days returned to me more vividly after reading your story of that time. In 1829—that I believe was the year—began one of the greatest privileges and pleasures of my life—my acquaintance with you and your sister. How good your mother was to me, then and after. How handsome your brother Henry! and then even a friend of some years' standing—dear John. Your father I did not see till some months later. When I was a guest in James Street he was at Liverpool, etc., etc. Soon after that August '29 (or was it July?) we all went our different ways. . . .

Yesterday I achieved a feat. I went with Miss J. Moore to see the reigning favourite in tragedy—Mr. Irving. I had indeed seen him formerly in several characters—not in any way Shakesperian—and thought well of him, and pretty sure that he would set his mark. He has done so, but not at all as I predicted to myself. Perhaps you know already that Mr. Irving has his zealous partisans. By-the-bye, if you have read my article in the "Edinburgh" on "Macready's Reminiscenses" you will very justly put me down as one of the partisans. But the fact is, I never saw until the review was in type, and what is more in circulation, what is therein written of the tragedian. All *that* was inserted by editor H. Reeve—the which he didn't ought to have done—without any by or with your leave. So, as matters stand, I pass for an Irvingite—as many people have passed for Christians—not being one. Well—after this programme, I go on to say that, as a whole, I am not greatly pleased with Irving's "Hamlet"; the level—and in some measure humorous passages

—he did well; not so the soliloquies (except that of "To be," etc.) —he rants and puts himself in the strangest postures, and in the scene with Ophelia when he bids her go to a nunnery, he was as unlike your father as it is possible to imagine. Next comes "Othello" and I think it not improbable that I shall avoid seeing it. I saw Salvini in that character last year, and E. Kean formerly, and that is enough for one mortal life. . . .

FEBRUARY 6, 1876
40 WEYMOUTH STREET, W., PORTLAND PLACE

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

12 MARINE TERRACE
LOWESTOFT
MARCH 15, 1876

MY DEAR OLD FRIEND,

I was very glad to have your letter giving so fair an account of your health; and you see that I lose no time in telling you so—there has been but a Cup of Coffee between my reading and now replying to it. To Mowbray I wrote only two days ago, I think; in reply to a letter from him. I think it very good of him to write to me, so much other writing as he doubtless has to do; and his letters are always very agreeable in all respects, especially when they tell me that you are well.

I ventured a letter to Spedding a week ago—really my one yearly letter—saying I should be well contented with any printed Paper of his by way of answer. *That*, I suppose, will ensure his silence. Mowbray tells me he had met him once or twice lately—"younger than ever" and as pleasantly "paradoxical," all which is good news to me. Perhaps he will write to me in his own good time.

Yes; I too was touched by Carlyle's attendance at Funeral and *Wedding!* a thing he would scarce have done when a younger and stronger man. Like you I can now think of him as "dear old Carlyle" which I had not thought of before. I wonder if he sometimes meditates on his old acerbities and thinks they have not come to much.

Pollock, to whom I sent a page of Mrs. Kemble's letter containing warm and sincere praise of Macready's book, wishing

she had known, when she knew, him, what a *good* Man he was, Pollock has written me among other things, that *he* hardly knows what to say of Irving's two last Shakespeares. But Miladi, it appears, continues her worship, which I presume is duly returned by her God—to whom she turns the same look when he sets, etc.

I wrote Mowbray how very much pleased Mrs. Kemble is with a full-length miniature of her Mother before her marriage with Charles Kemble in *character* of "Urania". Mrs. K. thinks and I begin to fancy (as she does) that I remember an old engraving of it, which I have begged Mrs. Edwards to look for. The Miniature was my Mother's, and (my Brother thinks) my Grandfather's before her; it is quite like Adelaide, when young [Mrs. Sartoris]. It is my Brother who wished to make this Present to Mrs. K.; and she returns him very warm thanks, which we know are always sincere,

As I am ever yours

E. FG.

PS.—My dear Donne, I must add this scrap to tell you of an article in last Saturday's [March 11] "Spectator" about "Tacitus' Annals," which you may like to see, and which you can judge of better than I. Of this I tell you with some little hesitation, as the Paper has been sent me, because of its containing a laudation of "Omar K.," which I daresay you will agree with also. But certainly it is for "Tacitus" not for "Omar K." that I refer you to the "Spectator". Indeed I should have cut the "Tacitus" out, and sent it to you along with this letter, but that I sent the whole Paper last night to Miss Crabbe—to whom I *do* send all my few laudations, because she takes more than enough interest in all that concerns one who is so connected with old Bredfield days. I am sure you will understand all this.

I thought of you when I read the "Tacitus" Paper, which has come to Mind again just when I had finished my letter to you.

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
APRIL 26, [1876]

MY DEAR DONNE,

. . . . . .

I have written to Mrs. Kemble knowing that she would never write to me unless I wrote to her first.

As to "Agamemnon"—I did it 12 years (or more) ago, after a conversation with her at her London Lodgings about the Greek Drama—laid it by—took it up once or twice; and last year put it into Type for the purpose of finishing it—so altered as scarce to be recognizable by any one who knows the Original, and I should suppose scarcely endurable to him. I sent it to none such, except to Cowell, who thought the last part too big and bloody for the beginning. I might have sent it to you, but for my knowing that you estimate any friend's work too partially.

The Dialogue is, I think, good—and some of it very good; but the Choruses are doubly false to Æschylus as being utterly without his *dark Inuendo style*, and poor in any style. Their only merit is, that they carry on the story intelligibly to one who does not know the Original. Anyhow, it is the *very last* of all my great Works, good or bad; I now could not finish any other if I had one to finish; much less *begin* one.

Ever yours
E. FG.

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
JULY 14, [1876]

MY DEAR DONNE,

. . . . . .

I do not think any one need regret Spedding's having hit at Macaulay. Macaulay had hit much more savagely, and unjustifiably at Bacon in an early Paper, which however he never cared to reconsider. Spedding was only bound to judge of his Essay by itself; and now that he has read his Life, he

thinks it was rather an inconsidered opinion taken up in youth, and *rhetorized* as Macaulay must do whether in Blame or Praise.

Spedding's reference to the Life he has just read is surely as fair and beautiful as may be. And the Doctor is dismissed with such terrible Charity! And, all the while, I think him—Macaulay—about as right as Spedding—in their view of old Bacon.

And am yours ever
E. FG.

W. B. Donne to Mrs. Fanny Kemble

THE VICARAGE
FAVERSHAM, KENT
OCT. 12, 76

. . . From Ed. FitzGerald you probably have heard that I made him a flying visit last month. Val and I being then near Woodbridge purposed to be his guests for three or four days; but unluckily his house—inside—had just been painted, and putting the case to my doctor, his reply was that if the smell of paint disagreed with me at all, it would do so severely, and throw me back to what I was at about the same time last year.

(Observe that I am writing in a clergyman's house, accordingly I do not swear, yet his ink strongly tempts me to do so.)

So I passed one day only with our friend, and in the afternoon at tea time, being in his drawing-room and windows closed I did discover the paint and the paint rather discovered me. It is worth your coming to England to see his earthly paradise (several Eves in it when his nieces are there, but harmless Eves—timid, and fearers of the devil in all shapes). Eve proper and wedlocked, never enters his garden; the which garden is as nicely laid out as his house. It will not be news to you that the great poet Alfred came to Woodbridge a few days after we left it. He and his eldest son Hallam, and the son made a most favourable impression on their host.

"What am I doing?" labouring to recollect what I once

knew, for my memory is becoming very treacherous. I go to school to myself. The main work is collecting, arranging and revising the notes and extracts I made of yore—and they are gradually filling up many pages in quarto-volumes—with these my heirs and assigns will do as they list. It is too late for *me* to do more with them. Be it known to you that on the 29th of last July I completed my 69th year!

A. T. Malkin is rejoicing in a good year for grouse, and signalised it by sending me a box containing four brace last month. Last year, and the year before, he had scarcely any, and shot only his rabbits.

We British are in great commotion just now as to whether there is to be war or peace. Britain, North and South alike, has sounded the trumpet against her ministers for dallying so long with the Turks. However, matters are now looking better, and the Islamites are shaking in their shoes, and promising to be better bairns in future. No one abhors more than I do public meetings and stump-oratory. But they have in this instance done yeoman's service in the cause of justice and humanity, and awakened the Earls of Beaconsfield and Derby from their slumbers. They are now doing what they ought to have done at least two months ago.

Of our friends in common I can send no news. Their houses are empty—and the owners of them dispersed over the earth. If you see the "Contemporary Review," you will perhaps have met with Spedding's Baconian articles therein. After demolishing a certain Dr. Abbot—"a young whipster"—he proceeds to damage the late Ld. Macaulay, and tears to tatters his once famous article—"Ed. Review"—on Bacon. It is no joke to be anatomised by J. S. I am a constant reader of the "Atlantic Monthly"—and so I shall be so long as you contribute to its pages. Reading your articles restores some "snatch of my youth".

FAVERSHAM VICARAGE, KENT
OCTOBER 12, '76

Apropos of Mr. Arthur Malkin and the present of grouse, an epitaph written by W. B. Donne, and kindly sent me by Mr.

Herbert Malkin, may be inserted here, though it appeared in an article by A. T. Malkin in *Fraser's Magazine*, April, 1862:—

THE BOX
HEREWITH RETURNED
IS
SACRED TO THE MEMORY
OF
TEN MEMBERS OF THE GROUSE FAMILY
WHO DIED SEPTEMBER, 1861.
THEY DID HONOUR TO SCOTLAND AND GOOD ALSO TO ENGLAND
AND BEFORE THEIR MORTAL BODIES VANISHED
THEY ATTAINED
THE ODOUR OF SANCTITY.
THE GRATEFUL RECEIVER OF THEIR LAST MORSEL
BY THIS INSCRIPTION
RECORDS THEIR WORTH.

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

UNDATED [1876]

MY DEAR DONNE,

I really and truly am quite at a loss to know why you speak (and I am sure you feel) with so much pleasure of being here. Well: I can as sincerely say (so you may wonder on your side) that you could scarce have more pleasure in my society than I in yours. So lets shake hands on that score.

. . . . . .

If you can handily send me the "Edinburgh" with the Review of Crabbe's "Tales of the Hall" (1819 or 1820) will you do so? I still mean to vamp together some extracts which you may one day show to Murray: who will of course decline them.

Woodbridge cannot maintain a Branch of Mudie; it is dead in Loder's hands. Not wishing to bother you I wrote to Mowbray to ask what Library of the Mudie sort was good to subscribe to, where one could get Foreign Books and Magazines. Mowbray will tell me, so do not you write, but believe me,

Ever yours
E. FG.

Edward FitzGerald to Mowbray Donne

My dear *Modie*,

Thank you for calling at Dixey's. They have this day sent me a pair of barnacles of course *not* like those I ordered and specified. So I shall have to send them back. But I shall not have to trouble you, once having got into communication with the Optician himself.

Why do you ask me about Ireland and America? I who never read any Paper but the "Athenæum," which does not meddle with such subjects, and an old "Ipswich Journal" whose Public News, and whose Remarks on it, I studiously avoid.

I continue to live in astonishment that England is suffered to go on in peace thus far; shall never be astonished to hear that she is at War, at home or abroad; but in the meanwhile will *not* plague myself with rumours and omens whose ill significance I can't evert, and which may turn out groundless, in spite of the omniscient Newspapers. I always say that the last American War—or Rebellion—proved sufficiently to me what the value of Newspaper Critics was, and made me vow to trouble myself about them no more.

What do you think of Browning's Poem? *I* say an impudent piece of Cockneyism—so far as I can judge from the three vain attempts I have made to read it. Alfred Tennyson says I am wrong, however, and I should shut my mouth after that, only that the magnanimous old Dog tried to force Bailey's "Festus" down our throats in the same way.

Now, Modie, when you were a Boy, and a Lad you were right to call me Mr. FitzGd. But now I wont have it any longer; remember it really chills me to see it. Tell Charles so too.

Ever yours

E. FG.

PS.—Ask "*the Missis*" if she remembers any part of Hopton called *The Lake* or *The Laig*—which old Posh tells me of very gravely. But you needn't write about it, Mowbray, nor answer this letter at all; for you have enough of it, I daresay.

I don't know if old Newson will go with me this Summer; one of his gang of Pilots is dead, and I don't know if the re-

mainder will spare him. Meanwhile he is rigging out the little Ship. I hope to have him Captain still; and he declares he can't sleep of nights—can't eat, etc., thinking of her—like his own child, he says—which is Blarney; as I tell him, when I set him down to a dinner at the Cookshop here.

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
DEC. 1, [1876]

MY DEAR DONNE,

Mr. Edwards whom you and Valentia saw at my house here, tells me that you promised him the sight of some MS. of yours relating (I think) to old English Domestic Life and Manners. Will you send it to him at 15 Cockspur Street? Nay more, will you call upon him yourself there? I would not invite you to any new acquaintance that I did not myself find agreeable. I have found both Mr. and Mrs. Edwards very agreeable, and am very sorry they have left my home. *He* left a good and lucrative Clerkship in the Admiralty to become a Painter—a little too late in life, I think, to succeed in that; but he would rather live that life on £100 a year, he says, than be restored to his Clerkship at £1,200—and I believe him. He has a strong understanding, much intuitive perception, Humour and Love for Literature as well as Art: Courage, Determination, Generosity, and the Heart of a Boy. *She* is a very clever, shrewd, and good woman: the very woman for an Artist's wife. I say again, I don't think you will repent making their acquaintance, which is not saying much to be sure—for whose acquaintance *do* you regret making; thinking, as you do, too well of everybody, and too ready to sacrifice yourself in serving them.

. . . . . .

Mowbray and Edith have, I daresay, told you of their visit here, which went off very well for all Parties, I believe—for *one*, I am sure.

Do not trouble yourself to write to me about this: I know you will do what I refer to; and I remain with love to all your party,

Ever yours
E. FG.

Mrs. Fanny Kemble to W. B. Donne

YORK FARM, BRANCHTOWN
JAN. 187(?)

My very dear friend—the Old Year is gone and the New Year is come, and that must not be without some greeting between us two—and since by your own acknowledgment yours is the worser *heart* of the two, it seems that I must make the overtures. The loss of your letters is a *huge* loss to me, but I find the total absence of communion with and knowledge of how it is faring with you and yours, the most intolerable part of my loss. I had hoped that Blanche or Valentia, or Mowbray, would have had the great kindness to send me a line occasionally of how all was with you all, and that in spite of your inability to write I should still know something of your being, doing, and suffering—of myself I have nothing to tell but what is a matter of thankfulness.

Your friend, admirer, and true lover Sarah Wister is living just opposite, across the road, almost near enough for us to make faces out of the window at each other. Mr. Leigh, Fanny, and their baby are well, in Georgia down on the Plantation, and we have good accounts of them, and having told you this much what more is there to tell?

. . . . . .

Yr. very affectionate friend
FANNY KEMBLE

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

12 MARINE TERRACE, LOWESTOFT
FEB. 14, [1877?]

MY DEAR DONNE,

I had been about to write—but to Mowbray—to ask about you, and also about Valentia's marriage—when? But, mind, *you* are not to answer that, but she herself, or Mowbray, one of these days.

Meanwhile, she does well to keep you to your house till Influenza be gone; one's only sorrow is, that she will have to cease her Attention before long, I suppose: I do not know if

I ought to say this to you who must long have had it present to your heart; and Valentia too. It is the "amari aliquid" in the cup.

I have really not looked into a Newspaper since Christmas, and so have kept myself from bothering about what I can't help. Gladstone I always looked on as Doctrinaire, but honest, as Politicians can be: D'Israeli as a very clever Quack, whose Statesmanship is as flashy and "superficial as his Novels". Indeed I judge the Fellow by his Books. I read "Coningsby" in the Summer, and find no impression left: *his* "Lord Hertford" a curious contrast to Thackeray's. And I have been reading Trollope's "Phineas Redax" here; *infinitely* better than Dizzy in the record of London Society, Clubs, Political Parties, etc., never a *caricature* as Dizzy is. . . . You speak of *cold* winds in London, I don't think we have had such here; only wet, wet, wet. When the dry times *does* come, I think it will last till Midsummer.

I wrote a line to old Spedding yesterday, not asking for a Reply; rather deprecating it: but only desiring he would send me, or let me know of anything he publishes anywhere. I see his Name among the Contributors to the "Nineteenth Century" —which seems to me a flabby Title, though the "Athenæum" tells me that Tennyson so christened it. Pollock, and his son and Miladi, figure, I see, among the Contributors. Annie Thackeray, who has lost all the Drawings—which were all I had, save two—of her Father's, wrote me word she had not been well.

I shall send off a line or two to Mrs. Kemble; and I am my dear Donne, whether in Red or Black,

Ever and ever yours
E. FG.

Mrs. Fanny Kemble to W. B. Donne

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 18, 1877

MY DEAR FRIEND,

The preceding page written yesterday was in its envelope, stamped and directed for the post, and with one hand the servant was taking it from me when with the other he held

out to me your most welcome letter of the 1st of this month—how gladly I took back and opened my unsent letter, sacrificing without a pang in the recklessness of my joy my three-penny postage stamp affixed to it. Oh! indeed you do not know how glad I was to see your handwriting again and to hear from you of yourself, even though it was that you must not work and must not play—or at any rate read plays—and must not rail—at any rate by road. I should rejoice for Charles' children's sake that they were under your roof and the tuition of their aunts but for the fear of the exertion for Blanche—however her undertaking the task speaks well for her present condition, and Valentia is valid as well as valiant. Give my kind love to them both.

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

12 MARINE TERRACE, LOWESTOFT
MARCH 20, 1877

MY DEAR DONNE,

You see how and why my Answer to your Letter is written and posted a day after "return".

I wrote to Mrs. Kemble some days ago, and had her usual prompt answer: she had seen you: and was rejoiced to find you *better* than when she went to America. This is what she writes of you, unsolicited by me, and you know she is sincere: as well as sagacious.

I want to hear a word about Annie Thackeray whose last Note to me—of some 2 months ago—spoke of herself as having been ill. . . .

. . . . . .

You however need not write about her, as I have asked Hallam Tennyson to let me know whenever he shall write.

I am sure you have only to please yourself about calling on the Poet. I will say no more of "Harold" than I said to himself on receiving it—that it does not shake my Loyalty to the "Fairy Prince" of the old Lincolnshire days.

Looking into a "Temple Bar Magazine" of three or four years ago, I found a paper by Lady Pollock on some Dramatic theme, in the course of which she says that Irving's Recitation of

Hood's "Eugene Aram" is such, that if any one among his audiences cherished a guilty secret in his Bosom he must forthwith either "confess it—or die".

You know, I daresay, that Groome's son edits some East Anglian Notes and Queries in the "Ipswich Journal," I believe. If you or Mowbray could help him with some of your capital Norfolk you would do Son and Father a good turn. Any scraps —it might amuse you perhaps, and you can be as desultory as you please.

I have bought the Biography and Letters of Charles Lamb in P. FitzGerald's new Edition, which is announced as "complete". Talfourd's two Memoirs are condensed into one; which is very well: but all C. L.'s Letters arranged in Batches to his several correspondents: which may or may not be so well.

The two first letters to Manning are transposed, as Date and Text show: so much for Editorial—and Hibernian—accuracy.

Then I have two vols. of newly-discovered Letters and Fragments of Letters, by my Blessed Sévigné: no very great addition to what we know of her, but much that is welcome. Whenever you read her, remember always to read "*ma Bonne*" instead of "*ma Fille*" which hitherto Editors thought more genteel. I keep thinking I will go to Brittany only to see her Home: but I suppose I shall keep thinking.

. . . . . .

I am yours as for more than 50 years my dear Donne.

Yours

E. FG.

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

12 MARINE TERRACE, LOWESTOFT
APRIL 9 [1877]

MY DEAR DONNE,

. . . . . .

I have been under the doctor's hands for a bad Foot: which would have been well before this had I rested it. But I can't sit in, reading—if I had books to read—all day, with very defective eyes. However I am to be home—at Woodbridge—

before the present week ends, I suppose. One day I shall get you to add a Note about Manning in my copy of Lamb. I always want to know what became of him; why Lamb's Letters to him ceased. . . .

I see dear old Barry Cornwall's Autobiography announced, and *that* of course one will read.

Mrs. Kemble's later "Atlantics" are delightful. And I am ever yours my dear Donne

E. FG.

Pray don't answer this mere note.

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
APRIL 24, [1877]

MY DEAR DONNE,

The Narrative of Manning's Journey reached me this morning: and, as your last Letter said that you would ask the Rev[d]. C. Manning for it, I have already written to thank him, as I thank you, for asking him for a copy.

I have just come home from taking my dear little Annie Kerrich to Dovercourt, where she is gone to visit an aged and very infirm Friend. I don't know when I shall see her again. Annie Bultihl came to stay with her here—*Great A*, and *little a*, as I call them. Old Mrs. Howe says indeed that—Great A would cut down into two of the little. We were merry enough together—sorry to part, I think.

I am expecting Edmund K. and his wife and blessed Babe before long; and my two eldest Nieces propose to be with me all June and July. After that I shall empty house, I think, unless you will come—and perhaps even Mrs. Kemble!

We really shine in Nightingales just now: and to-day is a true April day: Annie and I were observing the true *Constable* cloud, hanging over the Dedham Vale as we travelled by this Forenoon.

Now I am going to sit out on the Bench in my Garden and very possibly fall asleep after my journey, though no very long nor laborious one.

I am just now puzzled what Book to take up by way of "*Pièce de Résistance*"—perhaps the "Odyssey".

It is sad to think that Valentia leaves you: but your life has been one continual sacrifice of yourself to others. I mean what I say, my dear Donne, and also believe that I am right in my meaning: and have *that* reason, as well as so many others, to continue your

Affectionate Friend
E. FG.

Mr. Donne's youngest daughter Valentia was married on 24th May to Rev. R. F. Smith, Minor Canon of Southwell Minster. The following letter was written the day after the wedding:—

W. B. Donne to his daughter Mrs. R. F. Smith

MAY 25, 1877
WEYMOUTH ST.

MY DEAREST VALENTIA,

Your letter this morning has thrown a gleam of light over me for the whole day. We did not look for even a card from you until this afternoon's post at the very least. May Derby flourish for ever—for having a late open post-box.

Every one seems well pleased with yesterday's arrangement—both in Church and State—a by no means common agreement at the present hour.

Your husband did not bid me farewell. One reason for which may have been that he could not. I too was hindered from shaking his "fives," hindered by the hail and rain of rice that smote us as though we had been the servants of Pharaoh some time ago. I thought that Fred and Ada were the Moses and Miriam who called up this plague, but they were not more guilty than their elders. I, turning round to curse them, received a heavy fire from Mrs. Corry.[1] "Woman of age," I cried, "thou smitest sore:" but she seemed not to understand the illusion, probably having never read "The Lay of The Last Minstrel," and being very unlike the "Goblin Page".

[1] A very stout old Cook.

My dearest child, you have been my staff, comforter and blessing for many and many a year. I can never thank you sufficiently: I must always miss you—yet I may alleviate my loss by knowing that you have chosen so good a man as your husband.

Blanche has written a letter, probably far above mine in value.

Yrs. affec.
W. B. D.

Edward FitzGerald to Blanche Donne

WOODBRIDGE
OCT. 24, 1877

MY DEAR BLANCHE,

Your Father knows why I do not write to him, he should know also, that I am not without intelligence concerning him from Mowbray: and quite lately from Archdeacon Groome. I think he knows without my repeating it that I do not cease to think of him "with an Affection" which has not gone on diminishing near 60 years. I have been no further all the Summer than our Coast, Dunwich first and then Lowestoft, which has grown large, ugly and ill savouring from insufficient Drainage. Now I am back here again to my old Desk by Day, and my young Reader of a Night; we read "All Year Round," "Chambers' Miscellany," "Artemus Ward"; I am looking forward to the "Bride of Lammermoor," "Pirate," and "Old Mortality" as winter deepens.

Now you see this is a letter to *you* not to your Father, so he is not to write, nor (as you will find) have you to write again except *this much on a Post Card, Mrs. Kemble's Address.*

Ever yours
E. FG.

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
DEC. 7, '77

MY DEAR DONNE,

. . . . . .

R. Groome has just left me after 2 days' visit: pleasant as usual, and well in health, only I fear his Eyes do not mend. He

brought me a Book of East Anglican Notes; very good—I thought: and I was particularly glad to say how very much pleased I was with his own two "Suffolk" Letters. He went away this morning, proposing to interview the great Captain *Bro-hoke* (Brooke) on his way home.

. . . . . .

Mowbray told you, I daresay, that I went to London—to see Miss Crabbe, who wouldn't come here. . . . They were in a dingy outskirt of London, and it rained all the while I was there.

. . . . . .

Ever yrs. my dear Donne
E. FG.

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
DEC. 26, [1877]

MY DEAR DONNE,

Can you in one line send me *Barry Cornwall's* Address—somewhere in Wimpole Street, I think.

I have a mind to send the dear old Fellow a Brace of Pheasants this Christmas: but I don't know if I shall get the opportunity.

I was surprised by a letter from Mrs. Wister dated Vienna, and asking me to direct a few lines of Reply to her at Berne. I suppose she is on her way to join her Mother at Rome for the Winter. If you know Mrs. Kemble's address will you send me that too?

Mrs. Wister's letter was to ask if E. FG.—her Mother's old Friend—was the Translator of an old Persian Atheist whom she made acquaintance with in America, etc.

I see a Notice of A. T.'s "Window" in the Athenæum, as well been left unpublished: as also of Morris's "Earthly Paradise"—which *ditto*, so far as I am concerned. People, I believe, will soon weary of that unsubstantial stuff—though I don't mean "stuff" in a bad sense.

Edward Cowell *talked* of meeting me at Lowestoft this Christmas: but I don't think he will. Elizabeth wrote me the

other day, that, 5 minutes after his last Sanscrit Lecture was over, he himself was off to Christ's for an Arabic MS. which he was about to engage upon with Mr. Palmer of St. John's; and I do not think he will get away from man or MS. till next Term recalls him to his Sanscrit.

I suppose you keep Xmas in London with all your Family —to whom all give my love. I would send you a Turkey, but I think I remember you have them to satiety from Norfolk. If not, let me do so.

Ever yrs.
E. FG.

I am sending *Carlyle* a Brace of Pheasants! Anything of *Spedding* since Tom's death?

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
(UNDATED), 1877?

MY DEAR DONNE,

I write to you by return you see, because I am starting to-day for Dunwich—but 20 miles off on our coast. Aldis Wright goes with me (he has been staying a week here): and Edwards the Artist, is at Dunwich: so we propose to be merry together, if only we can get anything to eat at such an out of way place.

This departure of ours closes my Summer Campaign of visitors, and will give my old People a Holyday. Since June beginning I have had my house full of Nieces; and now all will return to its old Order, I suppose.

. . . . . .

I was to have had a rather notable visitor here: Lowell[1] of America, now Minister to Spain. But partly from some delay in getting my Answer, and partly from press of Business in London, he did not come. I would rather he could have come for two or three days, rather than a day's visit, which seems an absurdity in the lives of two men aged 70. But either way it is as well as it is. This must be hot weather at Madrid.

[1] The Hon. J. R. Lowell, formerly United States Minister at the Courts of Madrid and St. James'.

So you are going to old Norfolk again and pleasant Swaffham, where I should almost like to be with you for a while.

Wright has picked up a little—very little—about Manning and a Chinaman[1] he brought back with him, and who would go to look after him in Diss Church to the confusion of the Congregation.

. . . . . .

Ever yrs. sincerely
E. FG.

W. B. Donne to R. C. Trench

25 (40) Weymouth Street
Dec. 20, '77

Dear Archbishop,

Only a few days since I was cudgelling my brains to find a pretext for writing to you, at this near end of another year, in the hope that you might commission one of your household to tell me how you and they are. Last evening this scruple was removed by the arrival of your most kind and welcome gift of the "Mediæval Church History". The book, its author, and its donor make me truly grateful and happy.

As for myself I am well both in health and spirits. I rarely leave my own fireside. London ways and hours do not suit me, and I do not know that I suit them.

I can read much and am a good pedestrian. I am exempt from the hurry and worry I used to have at this time of the year especially, in reading plays, altering or forbidding them, or looking after performances or buildings.

In short I am now a kind of hermit in London—with a pension.

With every good wish for Christmas for yourself and Mrs. Trench,

I am always truly and gratefully yrs.
W. B. Donne

[1] "Chinese" Manning, the great traveller, and friend of Charles Lamb, once brought this Chinaman to Mattishall. The simple villagers fled from him as from the Devil himself, I have heard Mr. Donne say.

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
1878

MY DEAR OLD DONNE,

I think you know why I do not initiate a Letter to you; simply not to trouble you with writing to me till you be in the mind.

My principal inquiry of Mowbray is—How are you? and you see that I lose no time now Replying to you when you do write.

I hear from Spedding once a year—always a short, but kind, *reply*. You surely mistake when you say you have not seen him for *two* years: unless Valentia's wedding was so long ago; *I* may be mistaken in fancying it was *last* year: and certainly Mowbray or Pollock wrote me that the old serpent showed his head on that occasion. Mowbray says his Niece's Novel "Chetwynd" is "charming"; I have not read any of hers: I can't afford to have my Mudie Box taken up with three vols. of a Novel one would any way run over in a Day or two, and perhaps not care for at all.

Trollope's "Popenjay" I see in "All Year Round"; the weekly critics speak coldly of it; *I* wish it, or its like, would continue as long as I live.

My ½ yearly inquiry about Carlyle has resulted in hearing from his Niece that he is *quite* well; walking the Thames Embankment before Breakfast and going on in his old way, only driving, instead of walking, out of an Afternoon; reads incessantly: just now his eternal old Goethe, whom, she says, he never seems to tire of—and I, poor wretch, never can read at all.

Aldis Wright informs me that Laurence is about another Portrait of Trinity's Master (Thompson).

. . . . . .

Mrs. Kemble only writes to me when I write to her, and then as you know, she feels it a "Conscience" to reply. Some while ago she said her Book was to be published by Bentley—which I shall be glad of—with some omissions. I advised several more.

It seems as if I at Woodbridge were telling you more News than you in London are aware of. But perhaps not. Anyhow, I do my best, except in matter of MS., which is hurried so as to reach you by an early Post.

Ever yours, you know who.

W. B. Donne to J. W. Blakesley

25 WEYMOUTH STREET
PORTLAND PLACE
JANUARY 26, '78

MY DEAR DEAN,

The Archbishop of Dublin is now in Albermarle Street—Hallam's Hotel. He looks better than he did when last in London, and can walk on even ground and on rising pretty well, but he cannot descend without help, and has come hither to have some machine to support him. Mrs. Trench is much altered—looks careworn and is rather deaf. A thousand of the "Mediæval Church History" have been sold, and his Grace is cheered there-by. Like myself, he is eager to have the Turks driven out of Europe at least—and now Earl Beaconsfield is doing his best to keep them in. I wish Lord Salisbury had followed the example of Lords Derby and Carnarvon. If we come to war "we petty men" (I don't include *Deans*) will have to open our purses and eat meat about twice in the week.

Four of my grandchildren—two boys at first, and two girls after—have been staying with us. Blanche and I will miss them very much—they are all and each very good and loveable.

I have in hand just now a most delicious book, "The Roman Poets of the Augustan Age" by Sellar.[1] It is meat and drink to me to get back to Rome and its Poets—even in type.

Yours affectionately ever
W. B. DONNE

This is the last letter of W. B. Donne in this selection: in it one notices the first indications of failure of memory, in the slight mistakes in spelling, and in words erased and re-written, but the decline in power was very gradual although none the less distressing to those who loved him.

[1] William Young Sellar, 1825-1890, Professor of Latin at Edinburgh University. Published works on classical authors.

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
MARCH 14, [1878]

MY DEAR DONNE,

I have sent you many works: none better than the enclosed, though it may not be exactly accurate, Biographies differing, and I, a Paddy. I did it for myself, who felt often at a loss for some *Data* while reading the dear Fellow's Letters [Charles Lamb]:[1] especially as they are now published in Batches to several Correspondents. Then I thought some others might like some such Table also: and so Loder has printed it. You see that it may be stuck in by way of Fly-leaf to any Edition of the Letters, etc. I hesitated at expatiating so on the terrible year 1796, or even mentioning the Drink in 1804: but the first is necessary to show what a Saint and Hero the man was; and only a Noodle would fail to understand the Drink, etc., which never affected Lamb's conduct to those he loved. Bless him! "Saint Charles!" said Thackeray one day taking up one of his Letters, and putting it to his Forehead.

You can give a copy, if you please, to Mowbray and one to Mrs. Kemble, if she cares for it: but I shall soon be writing to her. Here I go on from day to day, week to week, month to month. I and my good Reader have made four of Sir Walter's Novels last us over four winter months; only taking him for a last "Bonne bouche". Who is the best Novelist I don't know: but I know that Sir Walter is the most *delightful* to me. Much weariness, some even *bad*. But, on the whole, I look back to each with Love; and with sadness to think that I may never read them again. I only speak of the earlier Scott novels.

I take it for granted you are well, not hearing otherwise from any one. You know I wish it. Only write when not disinclined; and with love to Blanche, believe me yours always

E. FG.

I have sent a copy to old Spedding!

[1] Charles Lamb, A calendar of his life in four pages.

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

WOODBRIDGE
MARCH 24

MY DEAR DONNE,

Thank you for the Carlyle Pamphlet. Some one told me lately that he had shut himself up in a somewhat miserly way in his Chelsea house; but I know not if my informant were well informed.

I wrote a few lines to Spedding a few days ago: but, as you had given me a comfortable account of him, I told him not to be at the trouble of answering my letter.

You may have heard of Kerrich's Death about a fortnight ago. A more easy dismissal no one could desire. I had thought for two years past that he might have Heart disease, judging by the same symptoms I had observed in Barton, Churchyard and others: but I do not know even now whether that was the cause of his Death. I saw him looking ill and feeble about a week before.

. . . . . .

Tell Mowbray to write to me when you have any good to tell of yourself: and believe me yours as always,

E. FG.

Edward FitzGerald to Blanche Donne

WOODBRIDGE
FRIDAY [1879]

MY DEAR BLANCHE,

Thank you for your letter, evil news as it announced. This Mortal year! Will it never have done with our friends? It was only yesterday that a thought came into my head that I would send Mrs. Sartoris[1] one of my Crabbe's. I wrote to Mrs. Kemble some days ago supposing her to be somewhere in Switzerland, and begged Coutts to direct my letter accordingly. She was probably telegraphed home.

Next week I go to Lowestoft where the Cowells are gone for a month, I suppose; but I tell him he must not look for me

[1] Mrs. Kemble's sister, Mrs. Sartoris, died 4th August, 1879.

to be so alert in body or mind as when we were there together nine years ago.

I wrote to Merivale and Blakesley and sent each of them a Crabbe some few weeks ago; had very kind letters in reply from both.

. . . . . .

I need not, save for form's sake, add that I am your dear Dad's and yours as ever.

E. FG.

Edward FitzGerald to Blanche Donne

JANUARY [1881]

MY DEAR BLANCHE,

Thank you—and your Father, for whom this letter is intended as well as for yourself—for all your kind wishes and Remembrances. You do not doubt either of you, I am sure, that I heartily reciprocate them.

My Xmas company has consisted of Aldis Wright and Arthur Charlesworth, with an occasional day-visitor, such as Brooke, who is young as ever, and rides a black charger, and makes himself happy and agreeable enough when he comes.

R. Groome *was* to have come over for the day but had one of his terrible head-aches ("Tigers" he calls them), and so was obliged to keep at home. Aldis Wright, who is my Guest for a week, brought his books with him: "Hebrew Commentaries for the Revision of the Bible"; "Robert of Gloucester" (whoever he may be) and his inseparable Shakespeare, of whom he communicates some to me. But as now is Holyday time, he gives but an hour or two of a morning to his Studies; then we dine at one, walk a little of an afternoon; then comes tea: and at 8 P.M. comes my Reader, who reads us the "Fortunes of Nigel," and "Experiences of an Edinburgh Detective." . . .

Yrs. and your father's affect.

E. FG.

During the Spring of 1882 W. B. Donne became very feeble. He passed quietly away on 20th June, 1882, at the age of 75, and was laid to rest beside his mother and son at Shooter's Hill Cemetery, Blackheath.

WILLIAM BODHAM DONNE

Mrau

His love of books lasted to the end, and he would sit with one of Scott's novels in his hands, fingering the book lovingly, long after the power to read it had passed away.

The foregoing correspondence gives an unconscious portrait of William Bodham Donne as an accomplished scholar, faithful friend, and conscientious public servant, but as his friend Mrs. Wister truly says: "It does not convey in any single page the sense of his refinement, simplicity and dignity of manner, his cultivation, and the gentle, genial humour, which was expressed less by witticisms than by an anecdote, an apt quotation, or even a sly smile or a significant gravity".

It was more for what he was, than for what he did, that W. B. Donne was beloved by all his friends, and to those friends

> He was *constant* as the Northern Star
> Of whose true-fixed and *resting* quality
> There is no fellow in the firmament.
>
> "Julius Cæsar."

LIST OF W. B. DONNE'S ARTICLES IN

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ON

Beaumont and Fletcher, March, 1850.
Plays and their Providers, September, 1853.
Charles Kemble, December, 1854.
Dr. Donaldson's *New Cratylus.*
The Old Civilians.
Helps' *Mexico*, September, 1855, 1857.
Drama, Past and Present, July, 1855.
Songs from Dramatists, November, 1854,
Froude's *History of England*, 1856.
Octavius of Mon. Felix, March, 1853.
Calderon, 1857.
Memoir of J. M. Kemble, 1857.
Froude's *History of England*, 1858.
Great Rebellion, 1858.
Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, 1859.
Cowper's *Poems*, 1861.
Froude, 1860.
Helps' *Spanish Conquest*, 1862.
Buckle's *Civilisation*, 1862.
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Tacitus and his Times, 1863.
Spedding's *Bacon*, 1869.
Swedenborg, 1869.
H. Crabb Robinson, 1869.

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ON

Sir T. Fowell Buxton.

BENTLEY'S QUARTERLY

ON

H. Walpole's *Letters*, March, 1859.
On the Drama, 1859.
Shakesperian Literature, October.
Ben Jonson, January, 1860.

DARK BLUE

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Theatrical Entertainments.

LITERARY GAZETTE

ON

J. M. Kemble, 1857.

THE PARTHENON

ON

Two Articles on Fun.

MACMILLAN'S MAGAZINE

ON

Ward's *Dramatic Literature.*

EDINBURGH REVIEW

ON

Napier's *Florence.*
Sharpe's *Egypt.*
J. M. Kemble's *Saxons in England.*
Hungarian Revolution, 1848-49.
Merivale's *Rome.*
Horace and Tasso.
Southey's *Life.*
Traditions of Hungary.
Marquis of Rockingham.
Caucasia.
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Life of Porson, 1861.
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ON

The Drama, December, 1854.

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ON

Propertius, January, 1854.
Diplomacy, October, 1854.
Dryden, April, 1855.

Athenian Comedy, January, 1856.
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ON

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Grote's *Alexander*, July, 1856.
The Great Rebellion, October, 1858.
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GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE

ON

Donaldson's *Cratylus*.
Carlyle's *Sterling*.
Mure's *Greek Literature*.
Grote on Sophists.
Stephen's *Lectures on France*.
C. Wordsworth's *Life of Wordsworth*.
Life of Stanley, Bishop of Norwich.
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ON

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ON

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ON

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Walton's *Lives* [Donne, etc.].
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Fitzball *Autobiography*, 1859.
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Tacitus.
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Hallam's *Introduction to Literature of Europe*.
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(2) Tacitus [Blackwood, 1873; reprint 1880].

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